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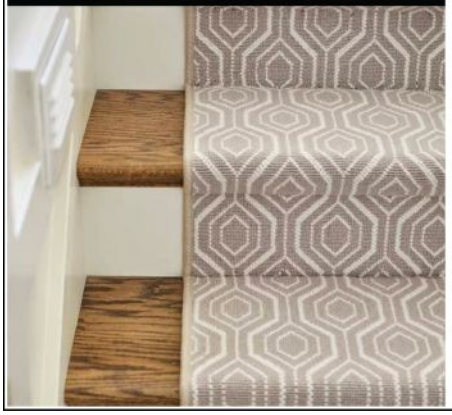

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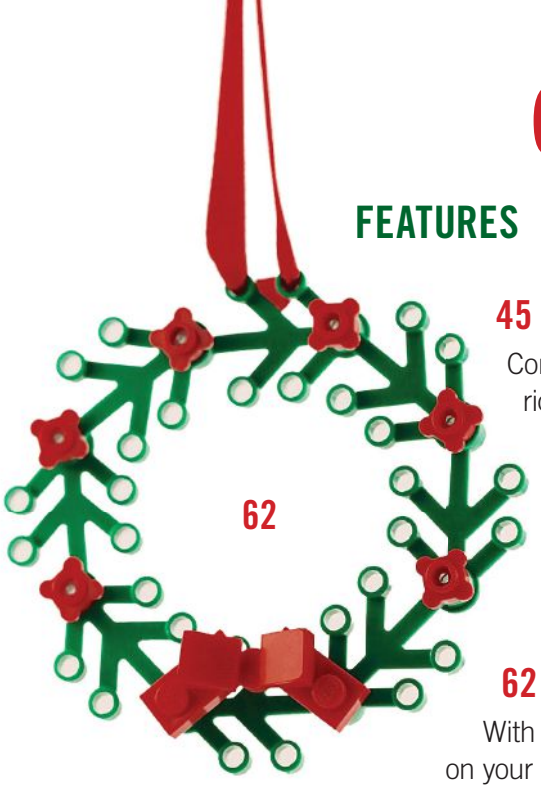

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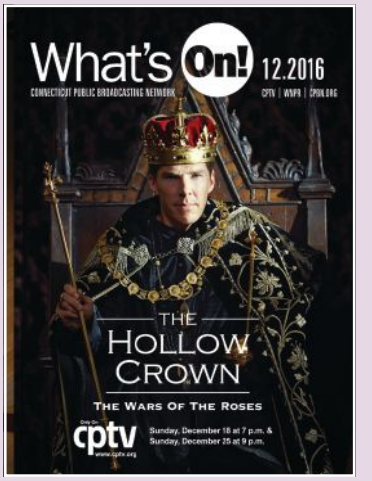
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This page: (top) Lego wreath ornament; photo courtesy of Brick & Button; (above) S&P Oyster Co. lobster bisque and New England clam chowder; photo courtesy of S&P Oyster Co., Mystic.

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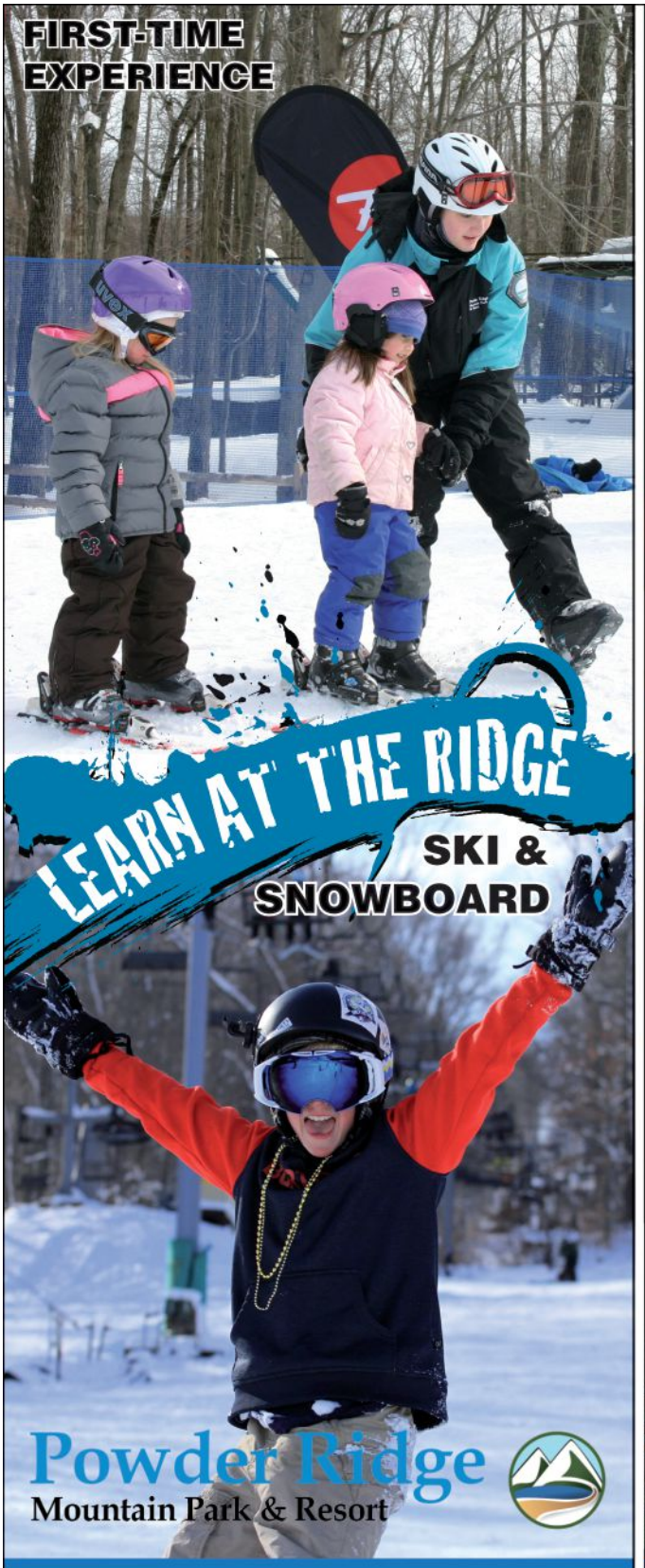

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I made my own chocolate bar once.

When I say I "made" a chocolate bar, what I mean is I was given all the ingredients and told exactly what to do.

Drawn to Fascia's Chocolates factory in Waterbury a couple of years back by the prospect of — what else — chocolate, I was suddenly back in school for a chocolate bar-making class.

We were given two plastic trays: one with three large egg-shaped reservoirs for "mix-ins," the other a large mold for the bar. The first big decision was the selection of three of the several available mix-ins. I quickly eliminated the crushed almonds and pecans. That left sprinkles, toasted coconut, Rice Krispies and Fruity Pebbles. I scooped up all but the sprinkles. We poured melted milk chocolate into our molds and added our mix-ins.

Up to this point, I had things pretty much under control. But when the mix-ins met the gooey chocolate, the difficulty rating shot up. The clock ticked on my hardening mess of chocolate and mix-ins.

As I frantically spread and smoothed the concoction with a popsicle stick, I thought back to the famous *I Love Lucy* chocolate scene we had been shown earlier, in which Lucy and Ethel must wrap individual chocolates before they pass by on a conveyor belt. At first it's easy. But the belt soon speeds up, and they hopelessly try to keep up, finally resorting to stuffing chocolates in their mouths, shirts and hats. At one point, Lucy tells Ethel, "I think we're fighting a losing game." I knew the feeling.

After a short lesson on chocolate history and production, we were given our now-firm bars to package and take home. I devoured my entire bar — perhaps twice the size of a standard Hershey's bar and far thicker — by the following day. Or was it later that night?

Did you know, just as our state has specialty trails for antiques, wine, beer, art and more, we have a chocolate trail with well over a dozen locations? Fascia's is on the trail. It's one of the many chocolate "Sweet Spots" (page 45) writer Tom Verde dips into, from the historic to the trendy, from the farm fresh to the truly exotic. And we've entered gift-giving season, so keep them in mind!

Speaking of gifts, we scoured the state to fill 18 pages with more than 200 of them, making for an overflowing 2016 Holiday Gift Guide. With ideas for men, women, kids, foodies, art lovers, tech-heads, those in need and so much more, start with page 62 and find the perfect gifts for the special people in your life.

Continuing the holiday theme — Ronnie Spector, the lead singer of the popular '60s group the Ronettes, performs her Christmas show at Mohegan Sun (page 29); we offer a roundup of some of Connecticut's best choral holiday music this month (page 32); filmmaker and funnyman John Waters offers his twisted take on the holiday at the Ridgefield Playhouse (page 34); writer Shelley Lawrence Kirkwood tells a personal story of how she came to cherish the Christmas Eve tradition of the Feast of the Seven Fishes (page 92).

Other food highlights include Erik Ofgang's review of Nom-eez in Bridgeport, where Vietnamese street food and doughnuts meld in a strangely satisfying way (page 83), and, to chase away the winter chill, a taste tour through the state's best chowders and bisques (page 89).

Also, in the wake of a momentous court decision that could radically change public education in Connecticut, don't miss our in-depth look at the future of education in our state (page 9) and an interview with former Education Secretary Arne Duncan (page 12).

Finally, Michael Lee-Murphy profiles a New Haven artist, originally from Syria, who is turning the heartache of his war-ravaged homeland into powerful architectural artwork (page 55). In the words of the artist, he is "weeping creatively," showing us that even scenes of destruction, when made with love, can bring beauty and hope for a better future.

Albert Yuravich
ayuravich@connecticutmag.com
Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @AlbertYuravich

Correction: Dr. Lewis L. Haynes, of Fairfield, was one of two Connecticut men who survived the sinking of the *USS Indianapolis* near the end of World War II. Dr. Haynes' middle initial was incorrect in the feature "Connecticut's 'Indy' Heroes," beginning on page 67 of the November issue.

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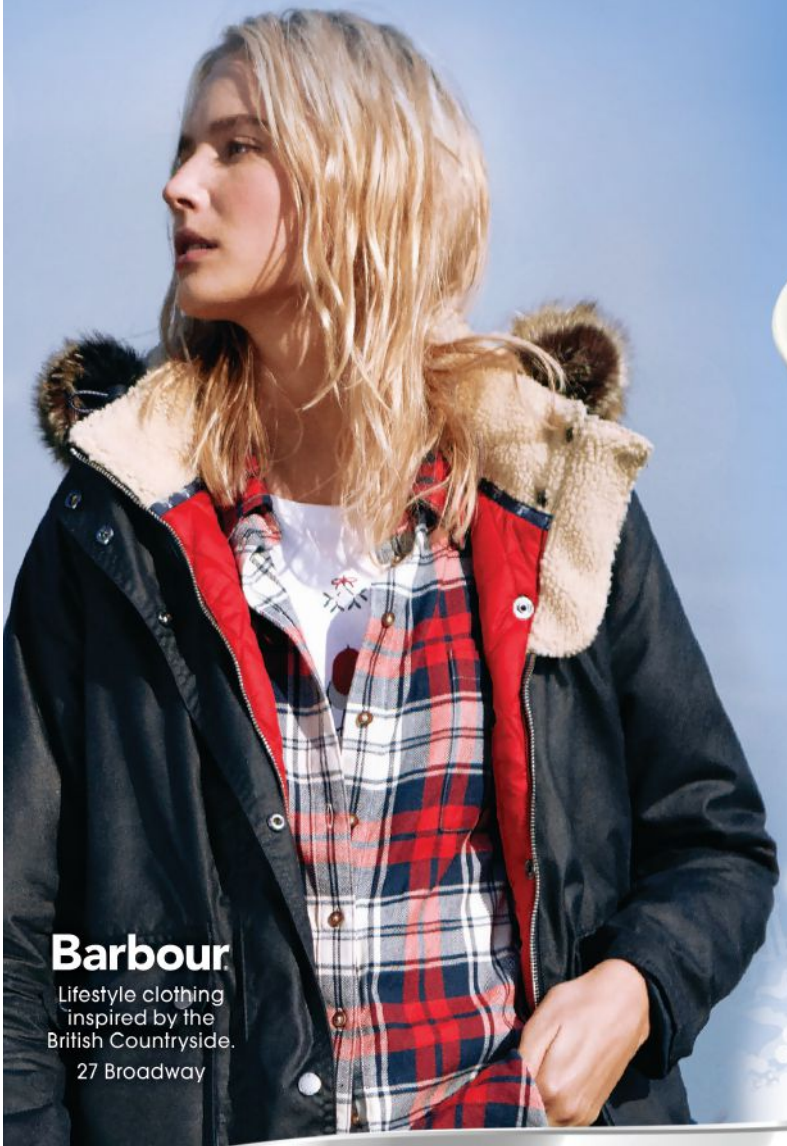

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Teachers Daniel Shay, left, and Radouane Nasry work with an interactive computer whiteboard system last September at the new Guilford High School.
PHOTO BY PETER HVIZDAK

|first|

What's at stake? The future of education

JUDGE'S LANDMARK DECISION SETS UP BATTLE OVER SCHOOLS FUNDING

BY ERIK OFGANG AND MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY

In September, Superior Court Judge Thomas Moukawsher sent shockwaves through Connecticut. In a ruling that drew national coverage and could fundamentally alter the state's education system, Moukawsher said "Connecticut is defaulting on its constitutional duty" to give an adequate education to all children in the state. He ordered the state to enact a series of reforms, suggesting changes to how schools are financed, how students graduate, how special education is funded and how teachers are paid and evaluated.

On the heels of a quick appeal by Attorney General George Jepsen's office, the case will be heard before the state Supreme Court, with the first brief being filed by the state in December. The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding, which filed the suit against the state that led to Moukawsher's ruling, has cross-appealed.

As this potentially historic legal battle heats up, we take a closer look at previous education rulings in Connecticut, the case that led to Moukawsher's ruling, the appeal process and what happens next.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The judicial system has long had a role in shaping education policy throughout the country, as groups have sought legal remedy to what state and federal governments have been unable or unwilling to do. The U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that racially segregated schools were unconstitutional is seen by many to have been the first big victory in the Civil Rights Movement. Famously, Judge Arthur Garrity enforced a desegregation solution in the Boston Public Schools system, leading to anti-busing riots. Here in Connecticut, the recent decision in *Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding v. Rell* is only the latest in a long arc of decisions that have impacted the school-funding landscape.

According to Alex Knopp, a visiting clinical lecturer in law at Yale Law School and a CCJEF adviser, to find the roots of the decision we have to go back 40 years. A 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* held that a school district funding system based on property taxes was not a violation of the 14th Amendment, which addresses equal protection of the laws, and thus that education was not a fundamental right under the U.S. Constitution. As a result, education advocates have turned to state courts, as state constitutions generally have guarantees of free public education. According to Knopp, education cases before the state high courts across the country have fallen into two broad categories: those addressing *equity* of school funding, and those addressing *adequacy* of school funding, with the equity cases coming first.

The first big equity court ruling in Connecticut came in 1977 with *Horton v. Meskill*, which ruled that a pure allocation of funding to municipalities of a dollar amount per pupil, without regard to the wealth disparities between towns, violated the state constitution in a system in which

WHO IS THOMAS MOUKAWSHER?

One of this drama's most central characters, Judge Thomas Moukawsher, does not have a speaking part. He has declined interviews since issuing his potentially landmark decision, leaving observers to parse his writing. What we know is that the 54-year-old Moukawsher has long-standing connections to the state's Democratic Party, including as its counsel when the party was led by Chairman George Jepsen (now the state's attorney general), served one term as a state representative and, as a child, suffered from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and a nonverbal learning disorder, according to an October op-ed he wrote in the *Hartford Courant*.

WHAT IS THE CCJEF?

The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding brought the case *CCJEF v. Rell* against the state in 2005. At that time, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy was mayor of Stamford and joined CCJEF in filing the suit. Today, the coalition comprises a broad array of educators, town officials, education organizations and private individuals, including 12 mayors or selectmen (among them Bridgeport's Joseph Ganim, Hartford's Luke Bronin and Waterbury's Neil O'Leary), five school board members from around the state, multiple education organizations and nonprofits, as well as several parent members representing children.

schools derive most funding from property tax. This decision required the state to create an education funding formula that offset the wealth disparities generated by a property tax-funding system. According to Knopp, the shortcomings of the various formulas generated around the country led to a new wave of cases that addressed not whether funding was *equitable* within a given system, but whether it was even *adequate* to fund a given student's education in the system. "Connecticut was rather late to the game," Knopp says. Referring to *CCJEF v. Rell,* Knopp says "our case was filed in 2005, and by then there was some fairly well-established principles about adequacy from these other state decisions."

WHAT DID THE COURT RULE?

In a 90-page ruling, which he read in its entirety from the bench, Moukawsher went far beyond discussion of the adequacy of the funding formula, addressing inequality, the property tax system, special education and other areas of education. Reduced to its most basic component, Moukawsher's ruling said the funding level in the education system was adequate, but its distribution was "arbitrary and irrational." Those two words are important, because according to the *Horton v. Meskill* decision in 1977, there must be a formula based on the relationship between needs and wealth. In functional terms, Connecticut has no such formula, Moukawsher has held. "The state spends billions of dollars on schools without any binding principle guaranteeing that education aid goes where it's needed. During the recent budget crisis, this left rich schools robbing millions of dollars from poor schools," the decision reads.

He went on to note that "Connecticut students do exceptionally well on standardized tests," but the achievement gap between low-income students and others is the largest in the nation. In the 2014-15 school year, more than 80 percent of the state's wealthiest towns surpassed the minimum for English on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests, while almost 70 percent of poor towns failed to meet these standards.

Moukawsher's ruling requires Connecticut to submit:

- A more "rational" education funding formula to replace what he called a system so "befuddled or misdirected as to be irrational."
- "An objective and mandatory statewide-graduation standard."
- Plans to replace the current "irrational statewide system of evaluation and compensation for education professionals."
- "New standards concerning special education which rationally, substantially, and verifiably link special education spending with elementary and secondary education."

Moukawsher initially gave the state 180 days to submit these remedies, a timetable now on hold due to the ongoing appeals process.

According to James Finley Jr., a principal consultant to CCJEF, the massive breadth and depth of Moukawsher's decision was a planned outcome. "A state constitutional case in regards to education in Connecticut is sort of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to evaluate the system. That's why he was very clear at the beginning that he was going to accept as much information during the trial as possible so that there was the broadest-possible record for an appellate review," Finley says. It is the scope of this decision that will be the most contentious part of the ongoing appeals process.

WHO IS APPEALING THE RULING AND WHY?

The state: Attorney General George Jepsen, whose office is handling the appeal, says Moukawsher went beyond the scope of the original case with his ruling.

"He pivoted and addressed issues that neither the plaintiffs nor the state had addressed or sought to address," Jepsen tells *Connecticut Magazine*. "Without disagreeing necessarily with the policy issues raised by Judge Moukawsher, we believe that he substantially and very significantly overstepped his boundaries as a judge and is usurping the legislative function of setting educational policy in the state."

Jepsen has publicly urged the state's legislature to address many of the concerns Moukawsher's ruling highlights, but says he had to appeal regardless of his opinion on individual policies suggested by the ruling.

Should the courts determine the state's education policy, Jepsen believes it should be the state's highest court. "Say I'm wrong and the Supreme Court sustains Judge Moukawsher on appeal. If we're going to have that kind of radical change in how education policy is made and implemented in the state of Connecticut, it should have the legitimacy of a Supreme Court decision, not simply the decision of a single, unelected superior court judge."

Conversely, Jepsen applauds the portion of Moukawsher's ruling regarding the state's overall education funding. "The constitution sets a minimum standard of educational adequacy, below which it cannot fall without risking court enforcement," Jepsen wrote in an opinion piece published by the *Hartford Courant*. "The court ruled that, by any legal measure, the state meets that minimal standard in providing educational opportunities. This does not mean our public education system does not suffer from serious challenges, but it does mean that the system is not so deficient as to be unconstitutional."

The CCJEF: In a cross-appeal, CCJEF argues that, as the Supreme Court reviews the ruling, it should also review the whole ruling, reconsidering whether Connecticut's schools funding is truly adequate.

"The plaintiffs submit that the trial court's articulation of the legal standard is erroneous in several respects," CCJEF argued in its appeal filed Sept. 19. "To review the trial court's conclusions by considering only its discussion of the constitutional test in the context of standards and policies, but not resources, would be artificially constrained and incomplete."

This is in keeping with the values of many of CCJEF's members.

"We agree that the present system for funding education is irrational and everything else (Moukawsher) called it," says Joseph J. Cirasuolo, executive director of the Association of Public School Superintendents, which is a member of CCJEF. "We're disappointed that the judge ruled that the state constitution does not guarantee that the state will provide the resources to make sure every kid has a program that's adequate for them. It's pretty hard to defend the notion that you can have equitable access to an inadequate program."

Some members of CCJEF, including the teachers unions AFT of Connecticut and Connecticut Education Association, do not support either half of Moukawsher's ruling, and are instead siding with both the state's appeal and CCJEF's cross-appeal.

Jan Hochadel, president of AFT Connecticut, which represents about 30,000 teachers, says, "It was unusual that [education funding] was the main topic [of the case] and how the process started, and there was no decision on that part, there's no remedy. He called for the legislature to handle that portion, and that was really the main reason for us signing onto the coalition back in 2005."

Hochadel also expressed concern about Moukawsher's recommendations for exit exams and more assessments of students, which she says harken back "to the failed policies of No Child Left Behind." She added that his recommendations for the hiring and firing of teachers concern issues negotiated contractually. "Many decades of collective bargaining should not be thrown out through one judge's decision."

Ed Leavy, AFT Connecticut officer's secretary/treasurer and liaison to CCJEF, downplayed the apparent disagreement within the coalition with regard to the ruling and appeal process. "The coalition continues to meet, we continue to have discussions. Like any coalition with different partners, there's different perspectives, but I wouldn't describe that as disagreement. I would describe that as part of the process of being in a coalition."

In a statement in response to the state's appeal, Sheila Cohen, president of the Connecticut Education Association, which represents 43,000 teachers, said, "We are pleased that the state is appealing certain aspects of the broad and overreaching court ruling in the *Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding v. Rell* lawsuit."

"The court found that Connecticut's education funding system is flawed and recognized the need to do more for students in high-poverty districts and we agree — but it failed to require the state to provide adequate funding for all schools — the heart of the *CCJEF v. Rell* lawsuit."

The new Guilford High School opened last September. PHOTO BY PETER HVIZDAK

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The state will file the brief for its appeal by Dec. 12, and CCJEF will have until Jan. 26 to file its response. The state then has 45 days to respond to CCJEF, and CCJEF has until April 12 to file its final response. Oral arguments in the case are scheduled to begin in May.

Thomas Mooney, a partner in the Hartford law firm of Shipman & Goodwin and author of *A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law*, says some aspects of the Moukawsher ruling, including his criticism of the teacher-evaluation system, are "only tangentially related to the question before him." Mooney, who also teaches education law courses at the University of Connecticut, adds, "our Supreme Court historically has tended to focus narrowly on the question before it and it will be up to the court whether to follow that principle or not."

By requiring the state to remedy the particular defects Moukawsher identified, many observers believe any solution by the state would entail increased funding. Thus, the decision puts the onus for any fix on the state legislature's ability to increase funding, without explicitly requiring it.

There is no deadline on the Supreme Court's decision, but Jepsen believes it may come by the end of 2017. "I think there is a likelihood that they would reach a decision in time for the 2018 legislative session," he says.

Others note that education cases can drag on for years, which this particular case has already done since 2005. Either way, the case could have an effect prior to the 2018 legislative session, as the legislature does not need to wait for the court case to attempt to address the issues raised by the ruling.

"I do expect that this case will be pending in court for many years," Mooney says. "I would also say that the existence of this case and some of the issues Judge Moukawsher raised may impel the General Assembly to action much more quickly. I think it's quite likely that these public policy questions will be debated in the General Assembly [this year] and some actions will be taken."

Arne Duncan Takes Us To School

FORMER EDUCATION SECRETARY JOINS CT FORUM PANEL DISCUSSION ON WHAT'S NEXT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

BY MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY

Arne Duncan, who served as President Obama's education secretary from 2009 until this past January, has been described as one of the most powerful secretaries of education in history. He will appear at the Connecticut Forum Dec. 4 at The Bushnell in Hartford, as part of the conversation "The Future of Higher Education" alongside Daphne Koller, founder of online education tool Coursera, and Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland at Baltimore County. The conversation will be hosted by WNPR's John Dankosky.

What have you been up to since you left the position as secretary of education?

Well, I've obviously moved back to Chicago, to my home. I'm still working on some national policy issues, but also very focused on trying to help out back home and reduce the level of violence. It's a pretty horrific rate. There are more murders in Chicago than in New York and L.A. combined, which is kind of crazy. We've been trying to work on the south and west sides with a lot of guys who are creating some of this mayhem, and trying to help move them out of the illegal economy and into the legal economy. We're trying to create both jobs and wraparound services: social and emotional support, trauma care for the guys who are most at risk of shooting or being shot, which is the 17-to-24-year-old age group.

What do you envision your conversation at the Connecticut Forum in Hartford to be about? Do you have particular policy lessons that you want the Hartford audience to hear about?

We want to have a conversation and hear what's working and what's not. Obviously there's been lots of innovation in Hartford around the magnet school work, and the focus on integration, which is fantastic. I think a lot of what we're going to talk about is how we, as a nation, take education to a different level, and sort of walk through what needs to happen. I would put it in at least three buckets, if not four: What we need to do more of in the early-childhood space, how do we continue to improve achievement and academic success in K-12, I would love us as a nation to lead the world in higher-ed completion, and then thinking a lot about adult learners who are struggling. There are not just the jobs, but there are entire industries that are disappearing. How do we retrain and retool them, and move them back into the workforce and give them a chance at the middle class.

A recent ruling in the *CCJEF v. Rell* case in Connecticut has placed a national spotlight on the way we fund education in the state. Do you think the property tax system is a good way to fund education?

Let me refer back to my home state of Illinois, which has some of the most inequitable funding formulas in the nation. Basically, in many places, the children of the wealthy get dramatically more spent on them than the children of the poor. And I always think the promise of education is always that education would be the great equalizer, that regardless of socio-economic status or racial background or ZIP code that every child that works hard will have access to a world-class education, and that can move them out of poverty and into the middle class. Hypothetically, where you have a situation where the children of the wealthy receive a much better education and have many more resources spent on them each year, kindergarten through 12th grade — for 13 years — that flies in the face of every principle that we should stand for as a nation. I just think we can't afford to let any talent stay on the sidelines. I think talent ... is often much more equally distributed than opportunity.

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Do you think the courts have a role in shaping education policy?

Courts absolutely have a role: *Brown v. Board,* cases that were transformational. But let me be clear. Having said that, my fervent wish is that courts didn't have to play a role. And I think often people sue and courts intervene to right tremendous injustice and if we as policymakers, if we as leaders, if we as folks who care about the community had policies that gave every child a chance and ensure that they were safe and protected and had access to a great education, then people wouldn't have to resort to the courts. I think people resort to the courts often out of desperation, as a place of last resort. So the courts have a very important role, but I wish it didn't take supreme courts to engage or state courts to engage. But the reality is that it does. By their very nature, they move slowly. And I always feel this great impatience. Kids have one chance.

You played college basketball at Harvard. We're pretty crazy about our Huskies. Do you think there's too much money going into college athletics?

I'm the co-chair of the Knight Commission, which looks at these issues. I don't want to speak on the specifics [in Connecticut] because I don't know the specifics there, but I will say more broadly that across the country — not everywhere, but in many places — a disproportionate amount of funding from the general student body is going to not just athletes, but to athletic programs and to coaches. I do think that in some places the balance is out of whack. And it is of concern. I say that as someone who is an extraordinary proponent of college athletes. Having a chance to be a student-athlete was, for me, a transformative experience for which I'll be forever grateful. But there was a balance of student first, athlete second, that I think in far too many places is lost.

Student-athletes bring a lot of money into their universities. Are they workers? Do you think they should be paid?

For me, the most important thing is that they receive that college degree. All the studies show that if you have a college degree versus a high school diploma you make like a million more dollars over your lifetime. I think the most important thing is to commit to academic success, and if we do that, the impact on their long-term earnings is extraordinary.

The Terrible T

A CONNECTICUT SUBMARINE SURVIVED PEARL HARBOR, THEN HELPED WIN THE WAR

BY ERIK OFGANG

Above, President Franklin Roosevelt visits the *Tautog* in August 1940. At left, the *Tautog* launches from Electric Boat in Groton in January 1940. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Pat Mignone didn't realize what was happening, not at first.

It was 7:50 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941, 75 years ago this month, and Mignone, a torpedoman's mate and an eight-year Navy veteran, was on the deck of the *USS Tautog*, a Connecticut submarine built in Groton at the Electric Boat Company and initially outfitted at the naval submarine base, also in Groton.

Looking out from the deck, Mignone saw planes flying low over Ford Island, a small island at the center of the naval base at Pearl Harbor. As part of training exercises, paratroopers regularly parachuted onto the island, which is what Mignone initially thought was happening.

Named for a blackfish found in the western Atlantic, the *Tautog* (pronounced *tow-tog*) was launched in Groton on March 1, 1939. Outfitted with a 59-man crew, the 307-foot ship had completed a 45-day patrol in the Pacific before returning to port on Dec. 5. It joined three other submarines at the submarine pier at Pearl Harbor, about 900 yards from Battleship Row, a grouping of eight battleships near Ford Island.

Watching the planes from the deck of the *Tautog*, Mignone soon realized they were dropping bombs, not paratroopers. At the same time, other planes appeared flying in low formation toward Battleship Row. They passed so close to Mignone "we could have thrown a rock and hit 'em," he recalled to the *St. Petersburg Times* 16 years later. Mignone clearly saw the planes' Japanese insignia and realized the base was under attack.

Mignone and those on the *Tautog* were about to be among the first U.S. troops to fire shots in World War II.

"The deck watch sounded battle stations, but it caught everybody by surprise. All over the Navy, 8 o'clock is 'colors' [the ceremonial raising of the flag] and when the sirens sounded, that's what they thought it was," Mignone said in the *St. Petersburg Times* story. But Mignone had seen the Japanese insignias and sprang into action. "I went below to get a machine gun out of the ready locker. It was three decks down, so I had a hard time getting it up and getting it mounted. I had somebody else bring me ammunition."

Mignone manned the machine gun, opening up on a low-flying "V" of Japanese torpedo planes storming past the submarines toward the battleships. According to the book *U.S. Submarine Operations in World II,* observers saw "the fiery whip of bullets lash out from the *Tautog*'s deck and flick across the [Japanese] plane's fuselage. A blinding flash — then, streaming a plume of smoke, the plane nosedived into the channel."

Mignone, with possible assistance from other ships, hit his mark and said the plane "seemed to disintegrate in mid-air. I kept firing until I ran out of ammunition."

Mignone and the *Tautog* had brought down one of the first enemy planes of the war, but it wouldn't be their last successful kill. Later that day, a second plane the *Tautog* was firing on was brought down in the same general area, possibly by the *Tautog*.

The ships in and around Battleship Row bore the brunt of the attack, and all eight U.S. Navy battleships were damaged, four of which were sunk. The attack killed 2,403 Americans, leading the U.S. to enter the war.

Curiously, the *Tautog* and other submarines at the submarine pier were never targeted by the Japanese.

"This is one of the great mysteries of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor: Why did the Japanese not attack the submarine base? Why did they not attack the fuel storage depot? And why did they not attack the munitions storage areas?" says Lt. Cmdr. Reginald Preston, director of the Navy's Submarine Force Museum in Groton.

Preston believes the Japanese did not attack the subs because submarine warfare, though it had been utilized in World War I, was still relatively new and the submarines "might not have been considered to be a tangible threat by the Japanese."

If that was indeed the reason submarines were ignored, it was a mistake.

"Because the Japanese specifically targeted Battleship Row and the shipyard, they inflicted great damage on the surface fleet, but it effectively left the submarine force unscathed with its weapons intact, with its fuel supply intact," Preston says. "Our surface navy had been taken

completely out of the fight. The submarine force allowed our navy the ability to immediately respond to the Japanese attack, [and] within a short number of days or weeks to send submarines over the horizon to find the enemy."

On Dec. 26, 19 days after the attack, the *Tautog* embarked on a reconnaissance mission near the Marshall Islands, where U.S. forces believed the Japanese had established a naval presence. "It's hard in the modern sense to think about not knowing where an entire fleet of an enemy might be. But in World War II we didn't have nearly the technology we have today, so it really was a matter of having to drive ships to where we hypothesized they were to see if they were there."

The Japanese fleet was not in the Marshall Islands, but the *Tautog's* mission helped narrow down the search area. During its next wartime patrol beginning in April 1942, the *Tautog* sank two enemy submarines and a Japanese cargo ship. It was the beginning of what would be one of the most impressive wartime records for a submarine. By war's end, the *Tautog* was credited with sinking 26 Japanese ships, earning the nickname "The Terrible T" and receiving 14 battle stars and the Navy Unit Commendation for World War II service.

The battle flag of the *Tautog*, with Japanese flags to signify enemy ships damaged and destroyed. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"She was the 'killingest' submarine in the war, and notably the first to sink three enemy submarines, later tied, never bested," Preston says.

After the war, Mignone, who had fired the first shots from the submarine during the Pearl Harbor attack, opened a bar in his native Florida. He died in 1980.

As for the *Tautog* itself, it was almost used as a target for atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in 1946, but those plans were canceled and the ship became a Navy training vessel in Milwaukee. On Nov. 15, 1959, the *Tautog* was sold for $45,000 to the Bultema Dock & Dredge Co., in Manistee, Michigan, for scrap.

Though *Tautog* no longer exists, 75 years after its first battle, the Connecticut-made submarine's wartime record speaks for itself.

The Unicycling Pilgrim

WEST HARTFORD COLLEGE STUDENT ONE-WHEELS CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

BY MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY

It takes a special type of person to undertake a 500-mile ancient Christian pilgrimage on foot. It's a difficult task, definitely, but hundreds of thousands of these special people walk Spain's Camino de Santiago every year, and they've been doing it for hundreds of years. To do most of the 500 miles on a unicycle? That's another type of special. West Hartford's Ellis Boettger is that person.

The Camino de Santiago winds its way down from the Pyrenees mountains on the border with France, across northern Spain toward the coast of the Galicia region on the Atlantic coast. According to Christian tradition, the area of northwestern Spain where the Camino ends is the final resting place of St. James, one of the 12 apostles. Even though Boettger is not particularly religious himself, he speaks of the Camino de Santiago with an almost religious reverence. He says the Camino *calls* people to travel it. "It changes you," he says of his trip in the spring.

The unicycle itself was an afterthought. It was only after he bought his plane ticket that he thought to bring it along. He'd been unicycling for seven years by that point, and in January started training at the West Hartford reservoir, doing 16-mile laps at a time. "I was 100 percent confident, except for the first day," he says with a chuckle. He says he did about 400 miles of the 500-mile journey on the unicycle. Boettger found the early stretch over the Pyrenees mountains easier than expected, and after that it was smooth sailing on the unicycle.

The 21-year-old political science major in his senior year at St. Anselm College in Goffstown, New Hampshire, says the people he met along the way have changed the way he moves through the world — beyond the one-wheeled cycling, that is. In the town of Astorga, just about the middle of Boettger's journey, a Swedish woman doing her own Camino trek told Boettger she didn't think he was a very good listener. He says she told him he tries to be a good listener, but only listens to see what he can add to the conversation later on. Boettger says the remark has changed the way he listens, always mindful now of what the other person is saying.

Perhaps Boettger's newfound attentiveness to the experience of others is the result of the particular sleeping conditions of the pilgrimage. Along the Camino, most pilgrims stay in albergues, a type of hostel specific to the Camino. The albergues are either run by the government, the local parish, or privately, and mostly feature bunk-bed arrangements. At a cost of $15-$20 for the private-run albergues, pilgrims can get a hot meal, reliable warm water and Wi-Fi.

But these changes — the reflectiveness, the listening — were not instantaneous for Boettger. "I really did not think anything changed about me, until I got back home," Boettger says. "I was actually pretty bummed, pretty upset, that when I got to the 0.00 [kilometer] marker, I felt like nothing really changed about my life, other than the fact that I completed this."

It was when he got home that he realized the trip had changed him. He says he feels less judgmental, a lesson we could all use. He said he is now more reflective, pausing to consider more of the world around him.

Of all the things Boettger could credit as inspiration to do a 500-mile trek in Spain, he points to the West Hartford public school language education system. He had been taking Spanish since the fourth grade, and repeated references to the Camino piqued his interest.

West Hartford's Ellis Boettger traversed 400 miles of the 500-mile Camino de Santiago on a unicycle. Most of the hundreds of thousands who make this pilgrimage each year simply walk. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

And he's not done yet. Boettger plans to do a shorter version of the Camino in March, and is weighing whether to bring the unicycle, saying there might be snow on the ground, and that he's "looking for a different experience," anyhow. Buoyed by his experience on the Camino, Boettger is also considering hiking the Pacific Crest Trail in the West, as well as another pilgrimage in Italy.

His advice for those who might want to set off on their own journey along the Camino?

"It opens your eyes, and if you think at all that the Camino might be calling to you, even just a little bit, just do some research. … If you're up in the air? Do it."

stepping out

Are you attending a benefit gala, awards celebration, holiday party or other public event? Email your photos and a brief description of the occasion to **steppingout@connecticutmag.com** to include your event on this page.

1. Greenwich resident Kathie Lee Gifford moderated a "Meet the Masters" panel at the **2016 Greenwich WINE+FOOD Festival** on Sept. 24. The annual festival benefited Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, Nischan's Wholesome Wave and the Greenwich Department of Parks and Recreation Scholarship Fund. Connecticut notables in attendance at the two-day event included ESPN *SportsCenter: AM* anchor Jaymee Sire, Fox 61 meteorologist Matt Scott, News12 anchor Ted Koppy, Westport author Jane Green, Chaz & AJ's Pam Ciaburri, Old Greenwich resident Gary Dell'Abate (Baba Booey from *The Howard Stern Show*) and Miss USA 2013 and Connecticut resident Erin Brady. Sharon resident Kevin Bacon performed with his brother at the event's Friday evening festivities. From left: Gifford, Adam Richman, Marcus Samuelsson, Michel Nischan, Marc Murphy and Alex Guarnaschelli. *(photo by Sara Luckey / courtesy Greenwich Wine + Food Festival)*

2. Celebrants gathered at the Connecticut Convention Center on Oct. 15 to support the 14th annual **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective's One Big Event** fundraiser. Attendees enjoyed a busy evening of socializing, auction bidding, dining and dancing to the Shaded Soul Band. From left: Mark E. Ojakian, president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities; Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman; U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal; Jason Veretto and Jack Kelly. *(photo by Tom Hurlbut)*

3. More than 400 students, parents, alumni and friends of Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden and Notre Dame High School in West Haven attended a **Mass of Thanksgiving** at St. Rita Church in Hamden in September in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the two schools. From left: ND Student Council President Jerrell Dorsey, '17, ND President Robert Curis, SHA President Sister Sheila O'Neill, ASCJ, Ph.D., '71, and SHA Student Council President Katherine Mackey, '17. *(photo by Steve Kirck II)*

4. The **Friends of Ecole Agape (School of Love)** held a pig roast in Storrs to benefit the primary school that serves about 180 girls in Lilavois, outside of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. More than 100 people attended the event, raising $6,500 to help provide free education to children in first through sixth grades whose impoverished families cannot afford the cost of public education. Fundraisers help to supplement teacher salaries, furnish necessary school supplies and provide a daily nutritious meal. More than 90 percent of Ecole Agape students have passed the country's National Primary School Exam. From left: Kacee Erhard, Cathy Belanger and Judy Belek. *(photo by Ann Cavanaugh Grosjean)*

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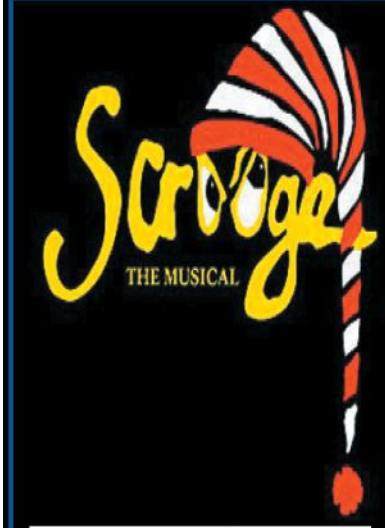

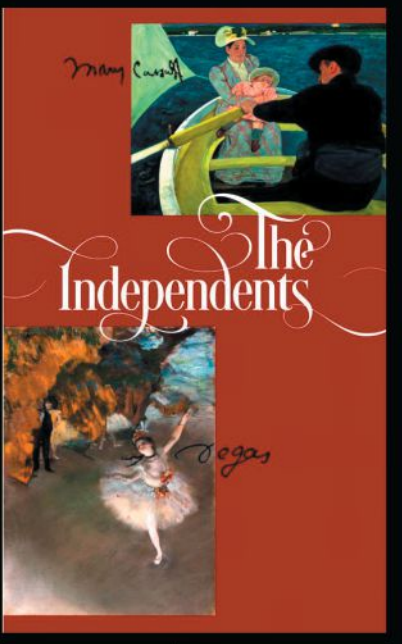

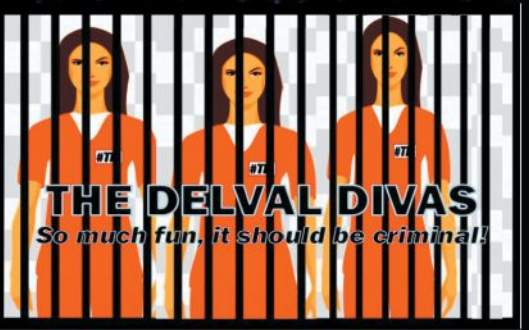

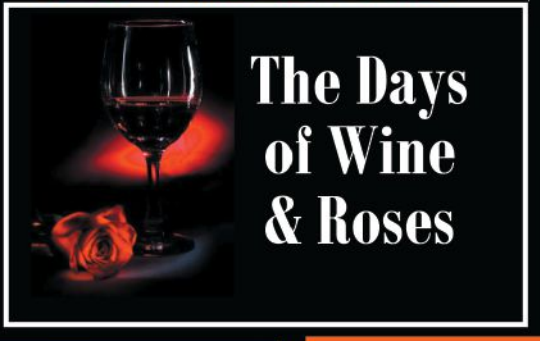

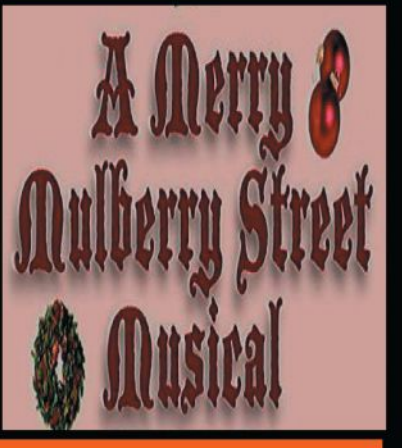

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TESTIMONIALS of SMALL MIRACLES

Adele, Age 75 "For many years, I have suffered from lower back pain and pain radiating down both of my legs to my feet from an accident. Every time I exercised or moved just the wrong way I'd have pain that would last for a long time. I couldn't even roll out of bed without extreme pain. After the third visit all of my pain was gone. It was my own little miracle. I was very impressed by the care but also by the fact that the doctors were knowledgeable and very personable. The staff was friendly and helpful and I would recommend their treatment to everyone with neck or back pain."

Jack, Age 37 "I was working as a Police officer in April when I was injured on the job, lost the strength in my left arm and hand and had a lot of pain in my neck and midback. I saw many Doctors for 6 months with no resolution to my problem, whether Physical Therapy, Steroids, Pain Medication, or Nerve Block. The Surgeon wanted to do a 3 level fusion on my neck as the last treatment option. I saw the ad in the paper and decided I didn't have anything to lose and to give it a try, but it was my last chance before getting surgery. After my second visit I had regained all of my strength in my left arm and hand and had minimal pain in my neck. My life has drastically improved."

Duane, Age 77 "I woke up one evening with severe pain going down my right leg and went to a Doctor who couldn't tell me what was wrong. He told me to go home, take a hot bath and in a week if it didn't go away to come back. I had an MRI showing a bulging disc in the lower spine, with arthritis and gout. A family member told me about the Deep-Tissue Laser Treatment®, and after the first session the pain lessened significantly. At the end of the visit I could move around great. By the 5th or 6th visit I had no more pain in my leg and lower back. I am extremely satisfied, my legs are stronger, and I am standing up straight. This has been a fantastic thing and it all happened in 4 to 5 weeks. If I could tell you anything it would be to not take pain killers or have surgery until you experience incredible **Deep-Tissue Laser Therapy".**

WITH RANDALL BEACH

Get Nostalgic with Wild Bill

When you come upon the parking lot and exterior of Wild Bill's Nostalgia Center on Route 3 in Middletown, you know immediately it lives up to its motto: "strange things."

There's the front end of a tie-dyed Volkswagen jutting out of the second floor.

And there's a psychedelic shack at the driveway entrance with a hand-painted message: "Wild Bill and the crew want to thank you for a groovy summer."

The store's exterior is covered with a multicolored mural depicting Bob Dylan at the corner of Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Bob Marley and a bare-chested gal hugging a giant mushroom.

When you walk around to the front entrance — following the sign instructing "Hippies use side door" — you behold a large painting of the characters from *The Wizard of Oz*.

And there, at the counter facing the front door, amid myriad posters and oddball counter-culture souvenirs, sits "Wild Bill" Ziegler. His head and face haven't yielded to scissors nor a razor blade in decades.

He grins and says, "Let me show you around."

And then he puts on a jacket and a red hat with the slogan: "Make America great again."

Could it be? This old hippie supports Republican Donald J. Trump for president?

Strange indeed, but all too true. During my visit, a few weeks before Election Day, Ziegler asserts, "I AM a Trump supporter. I think somebody else should have a chance to see what they can do for the country."

When I note some people might find it a tad ironic that "Wild Bill," of all people, favors Trump, he replies, "I don't think so. There are a lot of young people, including Wesleyan people (the university is a couple of miles down the road from him) who support Trump."

"He's a die-hard Republican!" affirms Ziegler's daughter, Heather Page, who works with him at the store. She suggests I check out the text on the box to the "Wild Bill" bobblehead doll. It's on sale there for $10, alongside the bobbleheads of Trump, Sarah Palin and Abraham Lincoln.

"Wild Bill" is proclaimed "the conservative hippie" on his box. It also notes he comes "armed with his eccentric ideals."

"I worked for Barry Goldwater's campaign," Ziegler informs me, harkening back to the ultra-conservative Republican presidential candidate from 1964.

Bill Ziegler, owner of Wild Bill's Nostalgia Center in Middletown, with his son, Berkshire Ziegler, and his daughter, Heather Page. CATHERINE AVALONE

No, you wouldn't have seen "Wild Bill" in the streets in the '60s, protesting the Vietnam War. "I joined the Air Force in 1966 during Vietnam. I was in Air Force intelligence."

So much for judging a book by its cover. He leads me out to his sprawling oddball estate: 45 acres that encompass a working farm, two funhouses and eye-catching sculptures, such as a creature's skeleton atop a Volkswagen half-buried in concrete, and the shells of three Yugos. ("Worst car ever made!" Ziegler tells me.)

We turn toward a 33-foot silo, on top of which is a 600-pound clown head. Ziegler bills it as "the largest jack-in-the-box in the world."

When I ask if he has documented this claim with the Guinness Book of World Records, he snorts and says, "That's a scam."

The clown head is supposed to rise and fall once every minute. But Ziegler tells me it's broken. "A belt needs to be replaced. Like most things here, it's a work in progress."

As we continue on the tour, Ziegler tells me he opened his store on Main Street in downtown Middletown 33 years ago. He relocated to Route 3 in 1996, he recalls, lured by the expansive grounds of what was once "a Mafia nightclub."

"Frank Sinatra sang here," Ziegler says.

He shows me some other "works in progress": a miniature castle with a stage from which he shows horror movies and has rock concerts in the summertime; and "Boathenge": a series of boats, all painted in wild colors, sticking out of the ground.

But the most sizable "works" of all are two amusement park funhouses. One of them, "Laff in the Dark," was converted to an annex used books and records store (open in warm weather only). The other, the "Haunted Funhouse," is not open to the public. Out front is a zombie Michael Jordan figurine, holding a severed head.

"I've got a quarter of a million dollars tied up in these two buildings but we can't get the permits to open them," Ziegler says. "There are no regulations on funhouses in Connecticut. They make up stuff."

When we get back to the main store, Ziegler tells me he's 70. But as for retiring, "I don't know the word." (Page vows she and her brother, Berkshire Ziegler, will keep the enterprise going.)

As Ziegler shows off his wares, including a Pee Wee Herman bicycle dangling from the ceiling, he asserts, "We're probably the largest poster store anywhere. I've got about 10,000 of them and back-ups of thousands and thousands more."

I spot a velvet rug depicting Elvis Presley in his Vegas period ($500) and then, next to him, a painting of P.T. Barnum.

"He's my hero," Ziegler says of the circus showman out of Bridgeport. "He did a lot of very unusual things to get people to give him money."

Wild Bill's Nostalgia Center is open seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. wildbillsonline.com

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Randall Beach is the longtime columnist for the New Haven Register, where his column appears Fridays and Sundays.

community

BY MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NORTH END ACTION TEAM

THE ORGANIZATION: North End Action Team, Middletown

THE STORY: The North End of Middletown has changed a lot over the years. In the 18th century, the city's location on the Connecticut River fostered a lot of trade in sugar, and slaves. Then the railroad and the brownstone quarries in Portland brought Irish immigrants, who cut the stone that would build large swaths of American cities, such as Brooklyn. After the Irish, the Italians built St. Sebastian's Church on Washington Street, modeled after a church back home in Melilli, Sicily. The great domestic migration of the 20th century brought millions of African Americans north from the Southern states, and the North End became home to the city's black population. The decades — centuries, even — of population changes in the North End have created a neighborhood that has always been dense and cohesive, but faced outward, toward the world. All the best parts of parochialism, mixed with all the best parts of cosmopolitanism.

This distinct North End attitude is perhaps best exemplified by the North End Action Team. From urban gardening, hip-hop and spoken-word workshops, to organizing defense against specific threats such as home foreclosures, NEAT is a catch-all. The organization is built to address many of the needs that a vibrant community like the North End can generate — needs that are not independent of the poverty that is another feature of the area. One of those needs is the saving of Macdonough Elementary School on Spring Street. The Middletown Board of Education, hoping to correct what it sees as a potential racial imbalance and to clear $700,000 from a strained budget, has proposed closing Macdonough and dispersing its students to other schools in Middletown.

One of the first people up to the microphone during an October board meeting's public-comment period is Precious Price, NEAT's new community director. A Middletown native who now lives in Waterbury, she tells the board about NEAT's community meeting the previous week. "I was astounded by the generational conversation about Macdonough School closing," she says. More than 30 people follow her, all testifying to the importance of the school. No one advocates closing the school. Bookending Price as the last testimony, a team of nearly 20 former and current Macdonough students belts their anthem, *Knowledge is Power,* for the Board of Education.

Knowledge is power, I know what I know.
The more you learn, the farther you'll go.
When you get an education, you'll be taking a stand,
Because knowledge is power. Grab it while you can. Yo!

After the North End makes its case to the board, Price talks about NEAT in an interview that is broken and choppy, because there are hugs and "thank yous" that need to be doled out to almost everyone leaving the city council chambers. Price had only been on the job for a month and a half when, at one of NEAT's monthly community meetings, the topic on everyone's lips was the potential closing of Macdonough. The topic needed its own meeting, Price realized. "People are so frustrated, and they were having conversations, like, right outside the school, but they had the kids [with them] and don't want to traumatize the kids. So I'm like, 'Let's create a space for the parents to talk.'"

Price says she went out canvassing door to door to draw parents to NEAT's three-hour meeting about the school, pulling in about 50 people. The meeting produced a petition, local news coverage and talking points for those parents who wanted to speak to the Board of Education. State Rep. Matt Lesser, D-Middletown, himself a North End resident, had worked with NEAT for years. In 2014, Lesser brought state money from Hartford to fund a NEAT-operated gun buyback program. "I think it has done an extraordinary job of helping North End residents realize their own power, and make the community a stronger, more vibrant place to live," Lesser says.

The youngsters who chanted their anthem at the school board meeting know the power they can exert if they stick together. And they know what's at stake.

neatmiddletown.org

If you have an organization with an event that you'd like us to consider for the Community page, please send the details to mmurphy@connecticutmag.com.

Experience the Holidays at ...

Olde Mistick Village

Always in Season

IMAGES FROM OLDE MISTICK VILLAGE'S FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AND HOLIDAY CARNIVAL
EXPLORE OLD MISTICK VILLAGE SHOPPES AND DECEMBER'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES. VISIT OLDEMISTICKVILLAGE.COM

'Tis the Season for Mystic Country

By MICHELLE BODAK ACRI

You've made your list, you've checked it twice — and man that list is long! No worries: We've got your back here in Mystic Country. Quaint downtowns to stroll, chic boutiques to explore, world-class shops with a casino or two attached … we've got options aplenty and — better yet — each is dressed to the nines in the holiday finery needed to get you in a festive mood. Lights in the riggings and the sound of carols in the air, a grand Yuletide harvest and a gingerbread house the likes of which you've never seen … we are more than ready to celebrate the season here in Mystic Country — won't you join us?

All That Jazz

December dates at the Old Lyme Inn's **SideDoor Jazz Club (860-434-0886 or thesidedoorjazz.com)**, named one of *DownBeat* magazine's 2016 Best International Jazz Venues, include the Brian Charette Trio on Dec. 2, the Ted Chubb Band on Dec. 3, the John Abercrombie/Rob Scheps Quartet on Dec. 9, the Nick Finzer Sextet on Dec. 10, the Rudy Royston Orion Trio on Dec. 16 and the Curtis Lundy Quartet on Dec. 23. Better yet: you get a discounted stay at the inn itself (860-434-2600 or oldlymeinn.com) with the purchase of jazz tickets! Built in 1856 as the center of a 300-acre working farm that many of Old Lyme's Impressionist artists later used to paint en plein air, the inn has 13 rooms that have been fully restored so that new (flat-screen televisions, gas fireplaces and organic linens) and old (antique furniture original to the inn and local artwork) mix nicely. #TasteStayGroove

THE SPA AT NORWICH INN

Show time

Mohegan Sun (888-226-7711 or mohegansun.com), currently celebrating its 20th year, has got it goin' on when it comes to holiday entertainment. A Peter White Christmas kicks things off on Dec. 3 in the Wolf Den, the Albano Ballet Co. production of The Nutcracker sugarcoats the Cabaret Theatre between Dec. 9 and 11, the Wolf Den has Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's Wild & Swingin' Holiday Party on Dec. 10 and Carpenters' Christmas on Dec. 11, and then Kenny Rogers takes over the arena on Dec. 16, the same night that Ronnie Spector's Best Christmas Party Ever! will be rocking the Wolf Den. Finally, Jay Leno brings the laughs for New Year's Eve at the arena.

The Shops at Mohegan Sun, meanwhile, include 35 luxury shops where you can expect to find everything from fine jewelry and apparel to sporting goods and the latest in electronics. The names should be familiar: Trailblazer, Robert Graham, Coach, Sephora, LUSH … Be on the lookout for the life-size gingerbread house that's the centerpiece of the season. No need to rush; you can spend the night in one of 400 luxurious guest rooms at the brand-new Earth Tower.

'Tis the season ...

... for a trip to **The Spa at Norwich Inn (860-425-3500 or thespaatnorwichinn.com)**. Special winter treatments (available Dec. 1 through Feb. 28) up for consideration: A Mandarin Orange Facial that combines aromatic notes of mandarin and kumquat with oxygen, minerals and a megadose of antioxidants; a Chocolate Mandarin Spice Body Wrap that employs sweetly scented Chocolate Gingerbread Body Scrub to gently exfoliate and Orange Gingerbread Lotion to nourish; a Chocolate Mandarin Spice Body Polish that includes the soothing rain of a Vichy shower; and, finally, a Gingerbread Spice Manicure and Pedicure that each begins with a Chocolate Orange Soak followed by an exfoliation using Chocolate Gingerbread Scrub, a masque, lotion and whatever polish you decide on to bring the holiday sparkle. Santa, please bring gift certificates!

Continued on page 24

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The Holidays at Olde Mistick Village

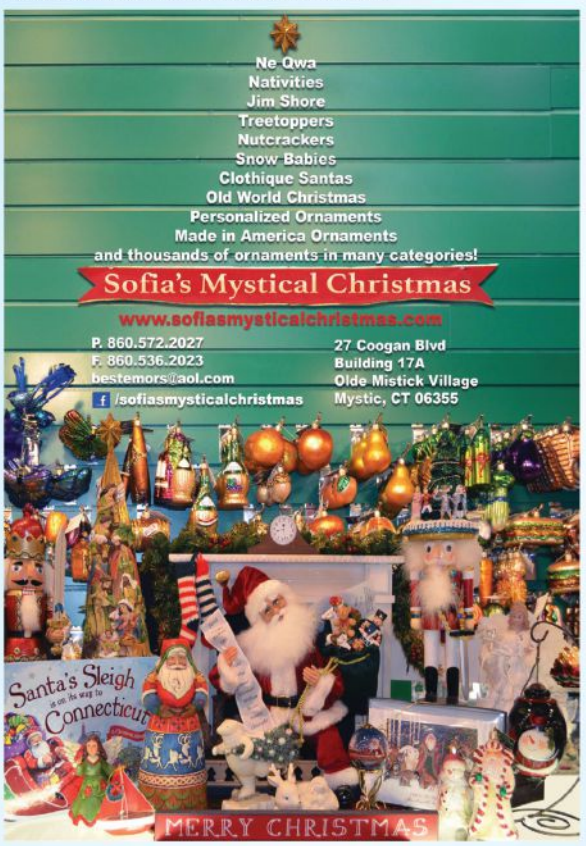
Festival of Lights

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2016 5:00 PM

Walk through our winter wonderland from dusk until 9:30pm when over 6,000 luminaries light the walkway of Olde Mistick Village and the surrounding area. This is a family friendly event with FREE parking and admission. Come stroll 23 acres and enjoy holiday decorations and festivities. Find a gift for that special someone in over 40 unique stores, dine in one of several restaurants, or catch a movie at our luxury cinema.

There will be complimentary refreshments in the Meeting House from 5:30-8:30 as you listen to Ragtime Too! perform holiday songs in a variety of musical styles. Outdoor entertainment will include Fly-by-Night Comedy Jugglers who will perform from 5:30-8:30 and the Festive Brass Ensemble playing holiday favorites in the Gazebo from 6-9pm. Carolers from Ledyard and Stonington High Schools and Tyl Middle School will be singing holiday classics as they roam the village. Santa & Mrs. Claus will see children of all ages from 6-8pm in front of Sophia's Magical Christmas located near the Village Green.

Mystic Aquarium will also have activities this night. Please see their website for details.



Holiday Carnival

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2016 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Throughout the Village there will be FREE entertainment all afternoon. The Fly-by-Night Comedy Jugglers will delight audiences of all ages from 12noon-3pm. Choirs from Stonington High School and Chariho High School in Rhode Island, along with the Mystic River Chorale, will be roaming the Village singing timeless holiday classics. The Festive Brass band will be performing from 2-3:30pm in the Gazebo on the Village Green and also parading around the Village.

Fox Glove Farm from Old Lyme will be providing FREE horse drawn wagon rides for the entire family from 1-4pm.

Children can do some holiday shopping at the very popular Santa's Workshop at the Meeting House from Noon to 4pm. Santa's elf, Gumdrop, will be there to assist children in selecting that special gift in a store designed just for them! All items will be priced under $10.00.

Santa & Mrs. Claus will be in front of Raining Cats & Dogs for photos with PETS ONLY from 12noon-3pm. This is your opportunity to take a photo of that special member of your family! Proceeds will be donated to charity.

The Olde Mistick Village Merchant's Association will again this year sponsor a gingerbread contest. Gingerbread houses will be on display at various stores. The public can vote for their favorite gingerbread creations!

The Holidays at Olde Mistick Village

Live Entertainment

UNDER THE GAZEBO

Festive Brass
December 3, 2PM

Festive Brass
December 4, 2PM

Festive Brass
December 9, 2PM

Festive Brass
December 10, 2PM

Festive Brass
December 11, 2PM

Festive Brass
December 17, 2PM

Festive Brass
December 18, 2PM

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Continued from page 21

To the point

Looking for a home away from home for the holidays? The Yule Tide Harvest at the **Saybrook Point Inn & Spa (860-395-3245 or saybrook.com)** is bound to be a sight to behold. This Christmas Day grand feast, available between noon and 6 p.m., will include everything from roasted chestnuts and Jonah crab claws to porcini-encrusted filet medallions and blackened Arctic char. And then there's New Year's Eve at The Point: The annual New Year's Eve Gala will include a cocktail reception, buffet dinner, open bar, live entertainment by The Cartells and, but of course, a champagne toast at midnight. The "Three Days & Two Nights New Year's Eve Weekend Gala Package" gets the celebration started early with check-in on Friday, Dec. 30, for a two-night stay, two tickets to the gala and a nice late checkout.

The Santa Special at Essex Steam Train. PHOTO BY KIM TYLER

Casino Christmas

Legends in Concert is back by popular demand at **Foxwoods Resort Casino (800-FOX-WOODS or foxwoods.com)** — and its magnificent sets, over-the-top costumes and spot-on impressions with it. This year's lineup features tribute artists for Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Prince, Paul McCartney, Elvis Presley and, for the first time, Taylor Swift. Shows run Nov. 25 through Jan. 1. Donny & Marie Osmond take a break from their run at The Flamingo in Las Vegas to bring holiday cheer to Foxwoods on Nov. 26 and 27. The Foxwoods Rink and Winter Patio opens on Dec. 3 with a spectacular tree lighting. The outdoor rink, surrounded with more than 100,000 lights, is open seven days a week. When you're ready to chill, find an Adirondack chair with your name on it by one of four outdoor fireplaces. Finally, Phil Vassar brings a mix of holiday favorites to the Fox Theater on Dec. 7. As for all that shopping you have left to do: Tanger Outlets at Foxwoods, the nation's first Tanger center with more than 70 stores under one roof, is where it's at. You're welcome.

To the North Pole — and fast!

Santa's sleigh is powered by locomotion at the **Essex Steam Train (860-767-0103 or essexsteamtrain.com)**. Happy holiday revelers can climb aboard the Santa Special Nov. 25 to Nov. 27, Dec. 3 and 4, Dec. 10 and 11, Dec. 17 and 18, Dec. 23, and Dec. 26-28. Santa and Mrs. Claus come along for the ride and will visit each child, while Rudolph and Pablo the Penguin help spread the holly-jolly cheer. The railway cars will be adorned with vintage decorations for each one-hour excursion and each child will receive a little something from one of Santa's elves. Christmas trains depart at 10:30, 11:30, noon, 1 p.m., 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., depending on the day. New for 2016 is the Reindeer Breakfast, available before 10:30 a.m. departures. Think scrambled eggs and bacon, biscuits and gravy, bagels, muffins and fresh fruit.

Let there be lights

Water's Edge Resort & Spa's (860-399-5901 or watersedgeresortandspa.com) 30th anniversary salute to the season kicks off with a Winter Wonderland Tree Lighting & Holiday Open House

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WATER'S EDGE

on Dec. 2 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Activities will include pictures with Santa, decorating gingerbread men, a giant gingerbread house, entertainment by an a cappella group from Daniel Hand High School, complimentary cookies and cocoa and, of course, a tree lighting. As for New Year's Eve: early dinner seatings at 5 and 5:30 p.m. are open to adults and children, and will include a four-course dinner complete with champagne or apple-cider toast, while a "Dinner & Dance Party" from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. will include a welcome reception, open bar, butler-passed hors d'oeuvres, a four-course dinner, live entertainment and a champagne toast and balloon drop at midnight. An overnight package also includes New Year's Day brunch.

Christmas Village

Olde Mistick Village's (860-536-4941 or oldemistickvillage.com) Holiday Carnival kicks off Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. and includes horse-drawn wagon rides, entertainment by the Festive Brass, stilt walkers, fire jugglers and caroling led by local choirs. Santa will be on the village green between 1 and 4 p.m. to have his photo taken with furry friends, and children 9 and under can visit Santa's Workshop in the Meeting House from noon to 4 p.m. to shop for their favorite folks (all items are under $10). Adults, too, are bound to find something for everyone on their list given the village's collection of 50 shops and eateries. If you missed anyone, c'mon back on Dec. 9 for the Festival of Lights, when thousands of luminarias light the walkways of the village and adjacent Mystic Aquarium.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas…

... at **Mystic Seaport (860-572-0711 or mystic seaport.org)**. The seaport's 37th annual Lantern Light Tours begin Nov. 25 and continue through Dec. 23.

This year's performance, deemed "The Nut-Cracker Sweets," is set on Christmas Eve in 1876 and includes a horse-drawn carriage ride, a spirited circle dance and a visit with old St. Nick himself. Admission is free with the donation of a canned good on Dec. 18 for the Community Carol Sing. The Mystic Seaport carolers will perform a concert in the Greenmanville Church at 2 p.m. and the carol sing, backed by a brass quartet, will commence at McGraw Quadrangle at 3 p.m. Finally, Holiday Magic, Dec. 26 through Jan. 1, will give families the chance to explore the winter sky under the dome at Treworgy Planetarium, watch a 19th-century magic show and take a special "Family Christmas at Sea" tour aboard the Charles W. Morgan.

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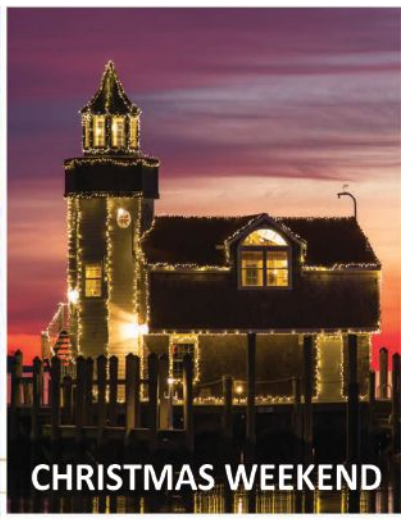

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BY MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY DECEMBER 2016

HIP-HOP HOORAY

Holiday time usually brings a mixed bag of performances of what is perhaps the most famous ballet of all time: *The Nutcracker*. But have you ever seen the Tchaikovsky masterpiece by way of 1980s Brooklyn? This December, legendary New York MC Kurtis Blow brings ***The Hip-Hop Nutcracker*** to the Bushnell in Hartford. The two-hour show features Tchaikovsky's score, with hip-hop choreography. Check this out for a fresh take on an old classic. Tickets are $19.50-$69.50.

THE HIP-HOP NUTCRACKER

DEC. 4 | THE BUSHNELL | HARTFORD

860-497-5600, bushnell.org

UNITED PALACE OF CULTURAL ARTS

HOLIDAY WONDERLAND

This year's Festival of Lights begins on Dec. 24, and ends on Jan. 1. Head down to Stamford to meet Judah Maccabee, do some arts and crafts, enter a Lego menorah-building competition and even check out an edible menorah. All types of events are offered at the **Chanukah Wonderland** at the Chabad of Stamford on Dec. 26-29 from 1-3 p.m. Ten dollars gets any child admission, a drink and a doughnut. Adults are admitted free. *chabadstamford.org*

See December 2016 calendar listings at connecticutmag.com/calendar

GREEN IS GOLD

Fulfill all your Christmas-decorating needs at this year's Mystic Garden Club Greens Sale. Wreaths, Christmas bouquets, ornaments, tabletop arrangements and bows will all be available. The sale is hosted by the over-90-year-old Mystic Garden Club, founded in 1924 to "stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, share the advantage of association, promote good environmental stewardship, aid in the protection of native plants and encourage civic planting," according to the group. This year's sale will be Dec. 2 from noon-3 p.m. and Dec. 3 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Mystic Museum of Art. *mysticgardenclub.org/greens-sale*

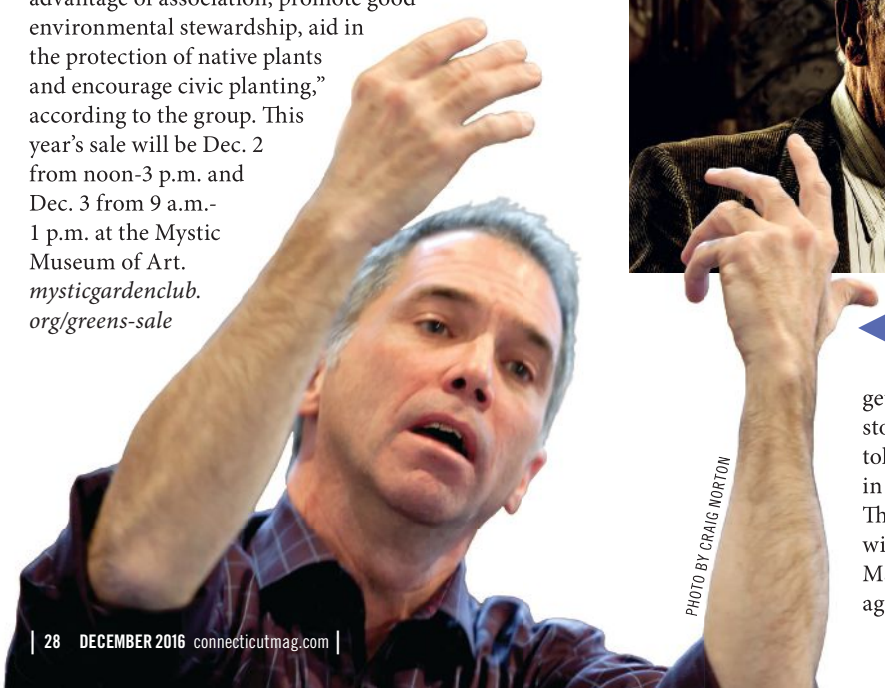

PHOTO BY CRAIG NORTON

CHRISTMASTOWN, CT

Many towns in New England are named for places in the Old World. For the Christmas season, be sure to visit the town that's named for the place where Christmas itself has its roots. The Bethlehem closer to home transforms itself every year into the Christmas capital of Connecticut. Choral music, a tree lighting, food vendors, horse-drawn hay rides and a visit from Santa Claus himself all feature in this two-day festival scheduled for Dec. 2 from 5-10 p.m. and Dec. 3 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. *christmastownfestival.com*

LIVE FROM LONDON'S WEST END

If you are sick of the holiday songs, lights, malls and the madness, catch some absurdist and bleak theater featuring two of the biggest names in contemporary drama: Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen. The play, Harold Pinter's *No Man's Land*, is broadcast live from the National Theater in London, beamed into several locations around Connecticut. Catch the live performance on Dec. 15 at The Ridgefield Playhouse and at Cinestudio in Hartford. Cinestudio will play an encore on Dec. 17, while the Quick Center for the Arts in Fairfield will play the encore on Jan. 18, and The Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center in Old Saybrook on Jan. 26. *ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk*

THE STORY'S THE THING

Before there were iPhones, iPads and Xboxes to get children excited during the holidays, there was storytelling. For thousands of years, in fact, people told each other stories for entertainment, especially in the cold months while gathered around a fire. This year, try out this ancient form of entertainment with professional storyteller Tom Lee at Wadsworth Mansion on Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. $10 adults, $5 children ages 6-12. *wadsworthmansion.com*

With her signature cat-stroke eyeliner and wild hair out to there, Danbury resident **Ronnie Spector**, best known as the front person of the '60s girl group The Ronettes, is still doing it all, at what is her favorite time of year. Besides a new album, the iconic singer is bringing her equally iconic holiday music and show *Ronnie Spector's Best Christmas Party Ever!* to Mohegan Sun on Dec. 16.

Tell me about your Christmas show coming up at Mohegan Sun.

Oh, it's going to be the greatest Christmas party! I'll wear my sexy Santa outfit. I hand out some gifts, sing some of my Christmas songs and some others by artists like John Lennon and share stories from my own Christmas holidays when I was growing up. You know, my mom was a waitress and was on her feet all day, but she always got us to Macy's and would stand in line for as long as it took so we could sit on Santa's lap and tell him what we wanted.

What was the best present you received as a child?

I remember wanting a doll one Christmas. I loved any kind of dolls and my mom told me she couldn't afford it and I had better tell Santa. I did and on Christmas morning it was there, this rubber kewpie doll with the painted-on curl. I thought it was the best gift ever, and it still is.

What was the best gift as an adult?

A 1969 Camaro. It had white stripes and my initials on it. And it came with a blow-up guy that looked like my ex [the producer and music writer Phil Spector]. He said he included the doll so that no one would mess with me.

So just how much do you like Christmas?

I love Christmas! I start getting excited about it in September. And, of course, I have a tree. A great tree. I would feel naked if I didn't have a Christmas tree.

Your signature holiday songs on the 1963 Christmas album *A Christmas Gift For You* include "Sleigh Ride," "Marshmallow World" and "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus." Do you remember how that album came about?

I think it was my idea and it turned into a collaboration with [Phil Spector], who was Jewish, so I would explain about the decorations and things we kept and put out each year. The album was actually released in 1963. Just as we started to tour to promote it, we were in Dallas as part of Dick Clark's *Caravan of Stars* tour and President John Kennedy was killed. Dick canceled the tour and it wasn't until two years later that the album became a hit.

You have something more current going on in music, as well.

My new album, *English Heart*, goes back to the days when many of the groups that were part of the British Invasion like the Rolling Stones and The Dave Clark Five were opening for me and the Ronettes. We performed a lot over there and there were songs that I wanted to do. My favorites on the new album are "How Can You Mend A Broken Heart" because it reminds me of my late sister [Estelle Bennett], who was part of the group. And I love "I'd Much Rather be With the Girls" because there is nothing like getting together with your girlfriends. The original song was really "I'd Much Rather Be With the Boys," but we changed it a bit.

You've been nicknamed "the first bad girl of rock 'n' roll." But you really aren't bad, are you?

Oh, no! I was so young when I was part of the Ronettes and I don't think people realize my mother always traveled with us. We were in England when the Beatles were just becoming popular there and John and all of them invited us to go to dinner and nicely asked my mom if she wanted to come, too. She grabbed her purse and came along. I looked like a bad girl; I worked on that, it was not me. As a child, my grandmother watched us in East Harlem while my mother worked and we weren't allowed outside. We could only go to the lobby. And I would sit and look out the window watching the Spanish girls with their great eyeliner and the Puerto Rican girls with the attitude and the black girls with cigarettes and think, "That's what I want to be." I wanted to look bad and act like I was bad.

I have to ask. What's the secret to doing that great eyeliner line of yours?

I buy these crayon eyeliners at the drugstore and wet them. I've been doing it so long it's no big deal to me.

What about new projects?

I keep thinking about doing some kind of album of girl group songs. We'll see.

What is something most people don't know about you?

I am very shy. [But] on stage I am a pistol. I love it. I love the energy. I have loved singing and performing and I give it my all. But when I am done I am a very different person. I don't have a lot of close friends. I have a great marriage and am happy to putter around the house and enjoy my family.

| MARYELLEN FILLO |

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Joy to the World!

THESE HOLIDAY MUSIC PERFORMANCES WILL GET YOU IN THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

BY MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY

One of the great joys of the holiday season is listening to the songs you know so well, sung live by a choir. Amid the sales, wrapping paper and squealing children, take a few moments to sit back, listen, reflect and relax. Snuggle into a church pew or an auditorium chair to remember what the holidays are all about. Here are our picks for the best choral music around the state in the month of December.

HANDEL WITH CARE

Handel's *Messiah* is perhaps the most famous piece of Christmas music in the world. Nothing captures the joy, excitement and sheer anticipation of the music in this classic. There are plenty of choices to hear the piece performed live. On Dec. 15, the **New Haven Symphony Orchestra** and the **Elm City Girls Choir** will perform it at Yale's Woolsey Hall. On Dec. 16, they are at the Sacred Heart University Chapel. On Dec. 17, they're at the First Congregational Church in Madison, and on Dec. 18 they team up with

The Mystic Community Carol Sing, above, will take place Dec. 18. The Elm City Girls Choir, below, will perform Handel's *Messiah* at four different locations. At left, Chelsea Tipton conducts the New Haven Symphony Orchestra.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

the **Greater Middletown Chorale** for a rendition at Middletown High School. If you can't get enough holiday music, the NHSO is also performing a Holiday Extravaganza on Dec. 10 at Hamden Middle School at 2:30 p.m., and on Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. at Shelton High School. For Handel's *Messiah* devotees east of the river, the **Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra** will present its version of the oratorio on Dec. 9 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Norwich, alongside the Norwich Diocesan Choir. Prices vary. *newhavensymphony.org*, *ectsymphony.com*, *gmchorale.org*

A BACH CHRISTMAS

For those on the shoreline, **Con Brio** takes on Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* at Old Lyme's Christ the King Church on Dec. 9 at 8 p.m., and Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. The piece was first performed in 1734. The program will also feature many well-known favorites, such as *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* and *I Saw Three Ships*. The audience is invited to sing along to certain famous numbers. *conbrio.org*

A CAPPELLA CAROLS

On Dec. 10, **CONCORA** — the Connecticut Choral Artists — will sing their favorite Christmas carols at the First Lutheran Church in New Britain at 7 p.m. According to a press release, CONCORA "presents a sleigh-full of these immortal a cappella carol arrangements by Sir David Willcocks, John Rutter, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and others." The audience is invited to sing along. $10-$55. *concora.org*

MAGICAL MENDELSSOHN

On Dec. 17 at 8 p.m., Fairfield's **Mendelssohn Choir** will take the stage at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Fairfield for its *Christmas: The Majesty and the Magic* showcase. The choir has been around for more than 30 years, so you know they know what they are doing. The show will feature a festival chorus and plenty of soloists. *mendelssohnchoir.com*

SONGS IN THE KEY OF SEA

On Dec. 18, Mystic Seaport plays host to the 62nd annual Mystic **Community Carol Sing**. Led by Ledyard High School Choral Director Jamie Spillane, members of the public are invited to belt out their favorite carol classics into the frosty December air. The old preserved seaport of Mystic provides the perfect setting to get into the holiday spirit. The event starts at the Greenmanville Church at 2 p.m. The caroling then moves outdoors to the McGraw Quadrangle at 3 p.m. *mysticseaport.org*

Con Brio has two performances scheduled this month in Old Lyme. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Twisted Christmas

'PRINCE OF PUKE' JOHN WATERS PUTS THE 'X' IN XMAS AT THE RIDGEFIELD PLAYHOUSE

BY FRANK RIZZO

Last July, John Waters was peddling down Commercial Street in Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod — and thinking of Christmas and "new ways to be bad."

Specifically, he was gearing up to write the latest edition of his annual holiday stand-up show, *A John Waters Christmas*, which will take him to the Ridgefield Playhouse on Dec. 19 at 8 p.m.

Christmas is not a holiday that you would automatically associate with the creator of such twisted film classics as *Hairspray, Pink Flamingos* and *Desperate Living.*

Halloween, maybe.

"Halloween is one of my *least* favorite holidays," he says from his home in Baltimore, the batty burg where most of his works are set.

Waters says he would like to create a few new holidays "because the old favorites have been commercialized to death.

And he would suggest?

"Absent Father's Day or maybe Dominating Mother's Day, or how about Tooth Fairy Day — which would have the oldest old-school queen in each neighborhood sitting in the mall, and when your kid's tooth is about to fall out, you take the kid there where the fairy gives you a new hairdo."

But Waters still has a semi-fondness for the yule season.

The filmmaker, author and bon mot guest says his first Christmas memory is when he asked his parents for a hand puppet "and the album entitled *The Genius of Ray Charles*. I have to give myself some credit on that one and I liked the fact that my parents actually got it for me."

And what did little John Waters make of Santa?

"I could tell that the man who played Santa every year was the man next door because he was not a very good actor. I thought, 'This was just a bald-faced lie' and I became skeptical of everything after that."

All in all, Christmas was a very confusing time for a lad like Waters.

"Who *was* Santa and did he have something to do with the Easter Bunny. Was he Satan? My guardian angel? Is Rudolph part of the Holy Trinity? I would get it all mixed up in my mind — on purpose."

Has John Waters ever re-gifted?

"You never fool anyone and people think, 'You cheap bastard' — but yes, I have. I get a lot of good gifts that people send me because they want quotes from books and stuff so … but I try not to. I think no gift is better."

He doesn't encourage gifts from fans but he has one that he holds dear. "It's sort of a Christmas sculpture of [drag actor] Divine knocking over the Christmas tree with the lights blinking. That goes on the table every year and has become a family heirloom."

For holiday atmosphere, Waters prefers obscure Christmas music, and has even compiled a holiday album. His favorite song on the recording is *Fat Daddy (Is Santa Claus)* by jive-talking Baltimore black DJ Fat Daddy. Fat Daddy hosted the monthly "Negro Day" on the local segregated television dance program of the '50s and '60s, *The Buddy Deane Show,* which was the inspiration for *The Corny Collins Show* in *Hairspray.*

Waters' crossover 1988 hit film *Hairspray* — and his subsequent fortunes — were super-sized when the film was made into a Broadway smash musical in 2002, a successful tour, a regional theater staple and a 2007 movie musical starring John Travolta in drag. This month NBC presents a live version of the show Dec. 7 at 8 p.m.

"Excited? Are you kidding?" he says. "Another version! Next is *Hairspray in Space*!'"

He says he had a development deal with HBO for a *Hairspray* sequel "but it didn't get picked up, but if this [NBC] version is a hit, who knows? You never know what's going to happen."

It could be Christmas all over again.

ridgefieldplayhouse.org

ILLUSTRATION BY KAGAN MCCLEOD

The Need for Speed

ON TRACK KARTING IN WALLINGFORD OFFERS WHITE-KNUCKLE THRILLS

BY MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY

There aren't many quintessentially American, immersive roadside activities anymore, the kind that used to litter the roadways of pre-internet life. People are bowling and mini-golfing less, and the drive-in movie is almost as rare as a Connecticut mountain lion (there have been a few reported sightings). Personal technology now takes up the time we used to spend on these things.

Inside a hulking warehouse in the back of a Route 5 parking lot in Wallingford, however, you can still find a true American roadside *experience,* in the truest sense of the word: go-karting. You first notice the drone of engines and the sweet smell of gasoline. These are the sounds and smells of *speed*. On Track Karting has been selling some of the most visceral thrills available for some 10 years now, first at their Wallingford location, and more recently at a second track in Brookfield.

A required waiver form, an instructional video, a helmet and a neck brace all attest to the seriousness of the endeavor: this is not bumper cars. The adult karts hit a top speed of about 40 mph, and the helmet and neck brace are there for a reason, as the handling in the karts feels closer to a fighter jet than any regular car. The sensitive steering mixes with the delicate interplay of gas, brake, gas. The hands, feet and eyes work to conduct a symphony of speed.

The track has sophisticated timing equipment that measures how fast you go around the track, and a large screen records each lap time down to the hundredth of a second. The idea here is that you are racing for pure speed, not for position on the track. If you come up behind a kart and driver who is slower than you, trackside assistants produce a flag to indicate that the slower kart should move aside. Your correspondent can confirm this flag was deployed for another *Connecticut Magazine* employee, who will remain unnamed, allowing yours truly to speed through to karting glory. Indeed, if you are looking for bragging rights, On Track will give you a printout after your race showing lap times. If you can clear a particular time around the track, racers can qualify to get into a higher class of faster karts. The truly obsessed can enter leagues to race against the best around.

Above, Michael Lee-Murphy edged Erik Ofgang to win the *Connecticut Magazine* 500. Below, an overhead view of On Track Karting in Wallingford. PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF ON TRACK KARTING / PHOTO BELOW BY ERIK OFGANG

Some of the best racers in America have even stopped by. According to Wallingford general manager Taylor Bossie, Middletown NASCAR great Joey Logano has even tried his hand at the track. Connecticut's Ryan Preece was an On Track regular before exploding onto the NASCAR scene in the past few years. On Track also has junior karts for racers ages 7 to 14, and even an outdoor track with small, battery-powered Kiddie Karts for speedsters under 7.

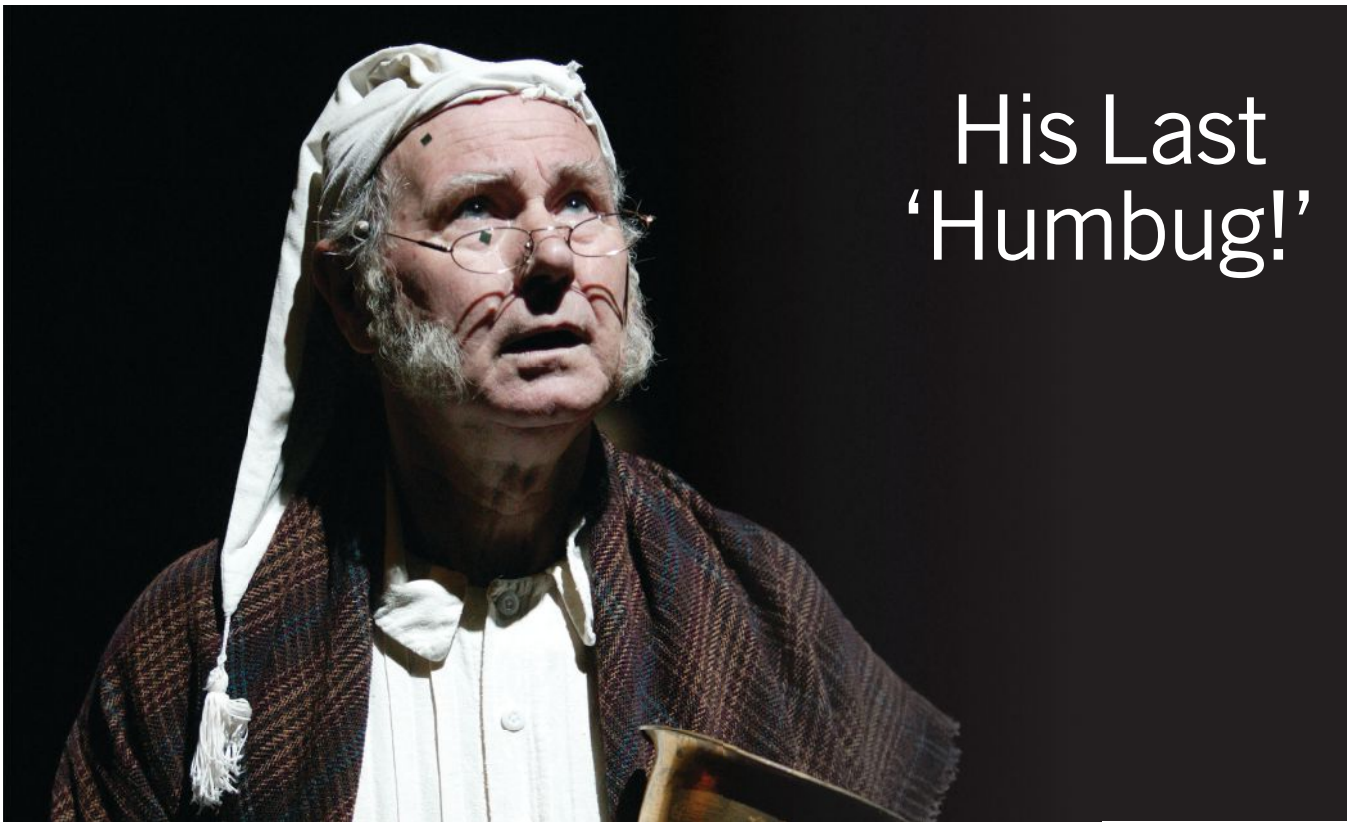
A single track credit is $20. Credits get cheaper the more you buy: three or more are $18 each, 10 or more are $17 each, 20 or more are $16 each and 50 or more are $13 each.

After you come off the track, you may want to give yourself a few minutes to let your nerves settle. A full 10 minutes after finishing a race in Wallingford this fall, my hands were still shaking. After ripping around the track in a go-kart, driving a normal car felt like handling a boat.

ontrackkarting.com

WITH FRANK RIZZO

His Last 'Humbug!'



Bill Raymond is reprising his role as Scrooge in Hartford Stage's *A Christmas Carol* for the 17th and final time. PHOTO COURTESY OF T. CHARLES ERICKSON

When Bill Raymond puts on his black cloak, silk top hat and yuletide sneer for *A Christmas Carol*, now playing at Hartford Stage, it will be for his last run in the role. After 17 seasons, he's performed before more than an accumulated quarter-million theatergoers.

"The people surrounding the show and the audiences have been like an extended family," Raymond tells me from his home in Manhattan.

Michael Wilson brought his version of the holiday classic to Hartford Stage when he arrived in 1998 as artistic director, thinking it would be a profitable perennial that would last five years, or maybe a few more than that.

"I'm 50 times blessed," says Raymond, who only missed the annual productions twice over 19 years (he was committed to Broadway shows).

Raymond reveals that Scrooge was supposed to "fly" alongside the soaring ghosts who visit him during his long night's journey into redemption. But that was one special effect that didn't quite work out for him.

"I was sitting in this harness for a long time when they introduced flying in the production a few years back and suddenly I started having these terrible spasms. I tried it for a week or so, but it was clear I couldn't do it so that was it."

The secret of the production's long success? "At the heart of the show is a kind of joy and humor that Michael has placed in this version."

Fans of the actor will have other chances to see his work. Raymond is featured in CPTV's original series shot in Hartford, *The Cobblestone Corridor*. His final bow as Scrooge will be Dec. 30.

POLKA-DOT DREAMS

When Douglas Lyons received his BFA as a musical theater grad of The Hartt School at the University of Hartford in 2009, little did he realize he would quickly get gigs in *The Book of Mormon* on Broadway, followed by a run in the hit *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, in which he is still performing (alongside fellow Hartt grad Kevin Duda).

But for the multi-talented Lyons, who grew up in New Haven, performing on Broadway wasn't the culmination of his dreams, but just the beginning.

A few years back, he released an 11-song album, *#LOVE*, which he wrote with Ethan Pakchar, an NYC- and Atlanta-based composer and musician. He described it as "a milkshake of theater, pop and R&B music."

Douglas Lyons has a new CD out based on *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical*. PHOTO BY MATTHEW SCHMIDT

Now he has a new CD, based on a young-people's show, *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical*, which had a developmental production last spring at the Ivoryton Playhouse, thanks to music director Michael Morris and Lyons' former professor there.

The show about kids of different shapes and sizes learning to get along with each other "doesn't talk down

to kids," says Lyons. "It's more like a Matilda in that vein."

With the CD just released on Masterworks Broadway featuring many of his New York pals, he hopes more productions of the four-actor, 14-song, one-hour show will result. But there's more adult musicals ahead for Lyons, too, including a new musical about the integration of a college fraternity in 1964 and another work that deals with Irish-African American tension in 1863 in lower Manhattan.

ELF-SUFFICIENT

At 6-foot-2, Spencer Micetich makes one big elf. But that's the point of the touring holiday musical *Elf*, which is slated to arrive at New Haven's Shubert Theatre the week before Christmas.

Based on the 2003 film that starred Will Ferrell as Buddy — the very big human who was raised by Santa as one of his own little helpers — the movie was one of the actor's favorites.

"My family would watch the film every holiday season and it would become a tradition for us," says a chirpy Micetich during a mid-autumn break in rehearsals for the non-Equity show. "And now performing a role that I grew up with watching as a child is quite a surreal experience."

The musical follows the film but, he says, "this is our own interpretation of it. We're not replicating any of the choices the actors have made in the movie. We are making it our own and keeping it fresh."

One can't help but to ask: How does one prepare to be an elf?

"It's a lot of candy eating," he laughs before adding one last Buddy-like note. "I just love Christmas."

Spencer Micetich (not pictured) is Buddy in the touring holiday musical *Elf*. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ABOVE THE FOLD

Jefferson Mays is happy to be playing only one role this time out on Broadway.

The Clinton-raised Yale grad is now in the hit revival of *The Front Page* starring Nathan Lane, in which he plays Bensinger, the most fastidious of a bunch of down-and-dirty reporters.

Prior to that show, he performed multiple deadly roles in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*, for which he earned a Tony Award nomination, and he played many characters in the solo show *I Am My Own Wife* (for which he received the Tony as outstanding actor).

"I have the same intrepid dresser as *Gentleman's Guide* and he's so bored," Mays told me over drinks at Sardi's.

"But any show that you do almost requires the same degree of energy. It's all just on the bubble all the time. The engine of this play is going 100 miles an hour, just in a different gear."

"I'm a Bensinger type," he laughs. "My dressing-room table reflects that. I like order, which probably indicates inner chaos." He remembers as a teen seeing *The Front Page* at New Haven's Long Wharf Theatre and zeroing in, not on the leading roles, but on the character of the germ-phobic scribe. "That's the role I want to play someday, I thought."

Jordan Lage, left, will play the role of Garfield in *Other People's Money*, which runs through Dec. 18 at Long Wharf Theatre. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TOUGH GUYS GET CAST

Jordan Lage wants you to know that he's not a low-life.

It's easy to understand why folks might think of the actor that way after his many performances playing less-than-upright figures in many of the plays of David Mamet such as *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *Speed the Plow in New York* and as a mob boss in *Ride the Tiger* at Long Wharf Theatre a few seasons back. Now he's back as, yep, another smarmy-yet-mesmerizing character: Garfield, the corporate raider, in *Other People's Money*, which plays Nov. 23 to Dec. 18.

"I hope it doesn't reflect on me personally," laughs Lage from his home in Chelsea. "I play nice guys, too — but the villains are a lot more fun to play."

And why is he so often cast this way?

"Hey, look at me. I'm a big guy. I give off maybe an air of — well, I like to think of it as confidence. But maybe people see something dark or mysterious and maybe that's why some think I can do characters as nuanced and complex as the doughnut-loving 'Larry the Liquidator' [in *Other People's Money*.] These are not one-note bad guys. They're a bundle of charm, slickness, bluntness and cut-throatness that people gravitate to. It's not unlike Donald Trump in real life: Men who can't seem to get a complete control of their id and the stuff keeps tumbling out of their mouths. Sometimes it's shocking. Sometimes it's amusing. It's always fascinating."

Frank Rizzo has covered the arts-entertainment scene in Connecticut since disco reigned in the '70s, including nearly 34 years writing for the Hartford Courant. *Email him at FrRiz@aol.com. Follow him on Twitter @ShowRiz.*

WITH KEVIN HUNT

Feeling Unfulfilled by Online Ordering?

This might come as a shock to those spoiled by Amazon's shopping experience, but not every item ordered from every online retailer is shipped just as promised.

Some people get stiffed.

A lot lost their shirts, literally, as the Connecticut Better Business Bureau recently announced an investigation into The Nerd Cave of Seymour for failing to deliver merchandise ordered, and paid for, online.

The business, owned by Igor Dviniatin, sells "limited-edition" pop culture T-shirts from what appears to be a still-active website (thenerdcave.com). There's no doubt, however, that online inventory passes the nerd test with T-shirts like "Property of Arkham Asylum Psychiatric Hospital" — a reference to the fictional den of the criminally insane in the Batman comics and movies.

The Better Business Bureau said it received more than three dozen complaints from 24 states about The Nerd Cave in two months. The state Department of Consumer Protection is also reviewing complaints against the business. (Legislative Director Leslie O'Brien, acting as DCP spokeswoman, says the agency cannot comment during an active investigation.)

Dviniatin, listed as the The Nerd Cave's principal owner since the business was registered with the state in March, did not return calls from The CONNsumer.

■ ■ ■

Getting your money back, or merchandise delivered, from an unfulfilled online order is not as easy as calling your credit card company. But it's a start.

Always use a credit card or other protected payment like PayPal, and never a debit card. Using a debit card online is like unprotected sex — you're taking a risk.

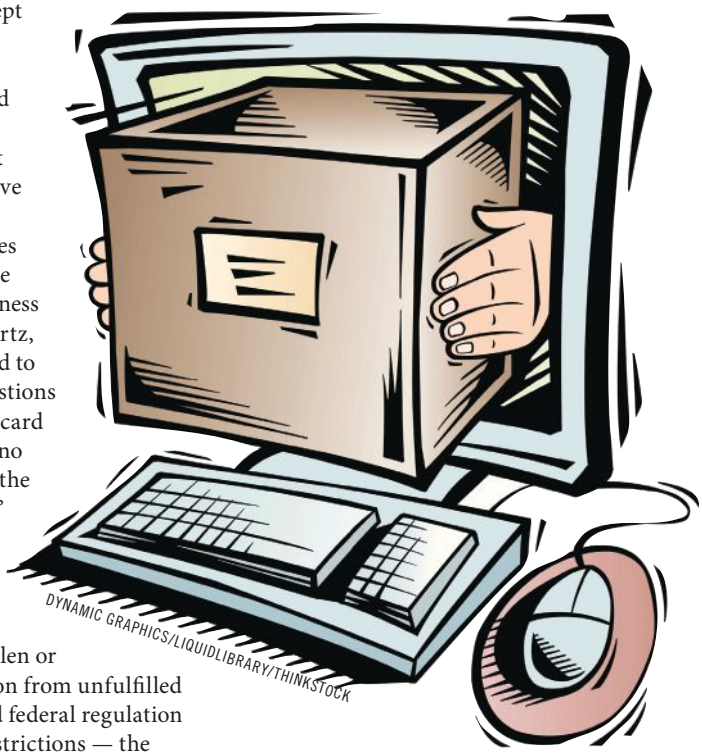
If the online retailer is out of state, the DCP cannot help. Instead, look to federal regulations for protection. The Mail, Internet or Telephone Order Merchandise Rule, administered by the Federal Trade Commission, protects the consumer from shipping delays of more than 30 days. As the rule's name suggests, this covers any mail, phone, fax or online order.

The law requires online sellers to ship within the promised time. When an order with your name, address and payment is received, they must ship the merchandise within 30 days.

The seller must notify you if there's a delay. You can then accept the new delivery date or receive a refund.

If you do not respond and the delay exceeds 30 days, the seller must cancel the order and give you a refund.

"If the company misses the 30-day rule," says the Connecticut Better Business Bureau's Howard Schwartz, "the consumer is entitled to that refund with no questions asked within one credit card billing cycle. There was no disclosure about this to the [Nerd Cave] customers."



DYNAMIC GRAPHICS/LIQUIDLIBRARY/THINKSTOCK

The Fair Credit Billing Act, which protects you from unauthorized charges when a credit card is stolen or lost, also offers protection from unfulfilled orders. This decades-old federal regulation still contains archaic restrictions — the purchase, $50 or more, must have been made either in the buyer's home state or within 100 miles — but credit card companies routinely overlook them.

Write to the credit card company at the address for billing inquiries, not the address for mailing monthly balance payments. Include your name, address, account number and the description of the transaction. Make sure the letter reaches the credit card company within 60 days of receiving the first bill with the contested charge.

If you used a credit card through PayPal, also check the PayPal Purchase Protection that guarantees a full refund if the merchandise does not arrive or is "significantly" different than described. Contact the seller first, then escalate to a claim if the dispute has not been resolved within 20 days.

So what happens when a credit card or debit card is lost or stolen? Credit card users cannot lose more than $50. A debit card user's maximum loss depends on the amount of time before the loss or theft is reported: $50 within two business days, $500 after two business days and potentially unlimited liability more than 60 days after first receiving a statement with an unauthorized charge.

"The important thing is that consumers don't wait too long if there is a problem with the vendor or the merchandise," Schwartz says.

The Nerd Cave responded to some complaints, says the Better Business Bureau, but more than a dozen remained unresolved as of this writing.

"You're not going to save any money by clicking to an unfamiliar site for the lowest price, if your purchase arrives late, or not at all," says Schwartz.

WHERE TO FILE A COMPLAINT

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
ftccomplaintassistant.gov, 877-382-4357 (about a company, organization or business practice)

STATE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION
ct.gov/dcp, 860-713-6300, 800-842-2649

STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE
ct.gov/ag, 860-808-5420

CONNECTICUT BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU
bbb.org/connecticut, 860-740-4500

Send your consumer complaints, concerns and tips to CONNsumer@connecticutmag.com.

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Edgehill continues to dramatically reshape senior living in Connecticut

Located on the Stamford-Greenwich line, Edgehill is known for its gracious and elegant lifestyle. Working with acclaimed architects and designers, Edgehill has created one of the most innovative, uniquely designed expansion projects in Fairfield County. The expansion adds three new independent living floor plans and a luxury spa level featuring a pool, fitness center, massage therapy center and more. The community even features an energy-efficient green roof, complete with walking paths and eco-friendly greenery.

As part of the expansion project, Edgehill now offers additional Assisted Living support in private, one-bedroom apartments, with a professional staff on call 24/7. In the new Harbor Memory Care wing, residents with Alzheimer's and other memory impairments enjoy private accommodations, award-winning programs and engaging activities.

A Benchmark Senior Living Community, Edgehill also gives residents the added protection and peace of mind of Lifecare—the assurance of health care for life. Lifecare provides valuable asset protection from potentially catastrophic future health care costs.

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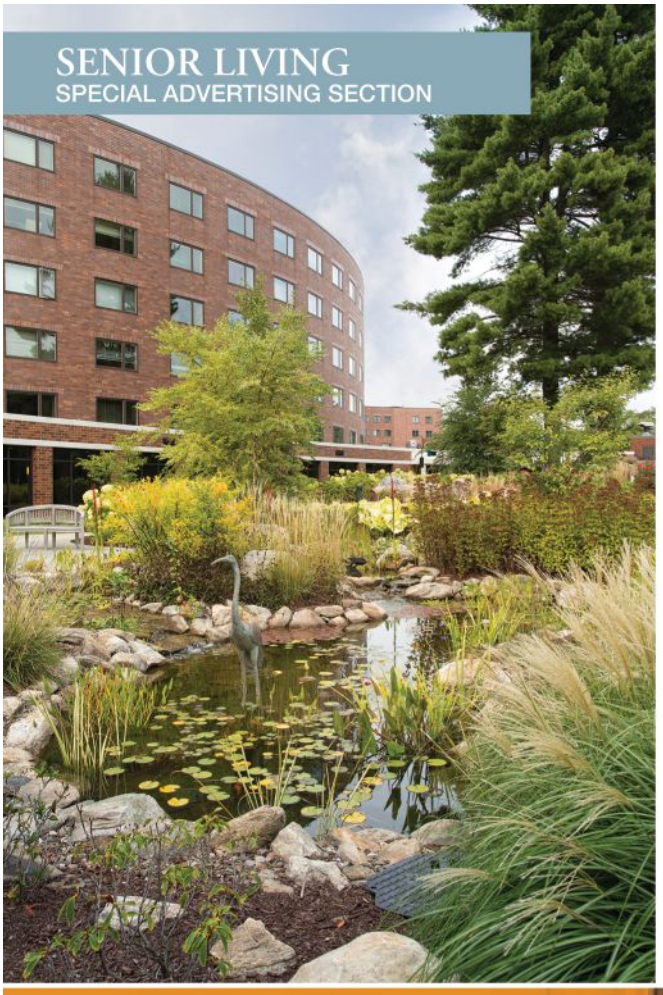

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Trudy Bollier, resident since 2012

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Jayne Sallerson is a warm, enthusiastic and compassionate executive with a heart for working with seniors. Jayne has been in senior care for more than 20 years and she says, "I still love what I do." At Benchmark Senior Living, Jayne now serves as Executive Vice President.

Jayne started this blog as a way to share the many questions she and her team get every day with other people looking for answers.

"I feel guilty about having a senior living conversation with my mom around the holidays!"

Dear Jayne:

As the holidays approach, I find myself becoming more concerned about my mother. Since my father passed away she lives alone. I know she is lonely, especially now that she isn't driving.

I'd love to talk to mom about moving to a senior living community before the holidays begin. Maybe even fly home in the next week or so to take her out to tour a few. But I feel so guilty and I'm concerned this isn't the best time of year to discuss it, or for her to make a move.

Do you have any advice?
Kristina

Dear Kristina: We hear this question often. Many adult children are reluctant to raise this issue and "ruin" the holiday season.

The truth is the holidays are a great time of year to make this move! For older adults who have been living alone, this time of year is even more difficult. Most adult children are busy with holiday parties or shopping, and tend to spend a little less time with their loved ones…

To see Jayne's entire answer visit benchmarkseniorliving.com/news-room.

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Sweet Spots

BY TOM VERDE

FROM TRADITIONAL chocolate Santas to edible chocolate sculptures and "single cow origin" confections made with milk from the chocolatier's very own cows, Connecticut offers chocolate fans — and chocoholics — a deep, dark, rich variety of options along its silky and seductive Chocolate Trail.

PHOTO BY PETER HVIZDAK

THOMPSON CHOCOLATE

80 South Vine St., Meriden
203-235-2541, thompsonchocolate.com

Head to Meriden to find the state's oldest chocolate maker, Thompson Chocolate, established in 1879. East Haven native and company founder William H. Thompson was an eager young man of 17 back in 1871 when he traveled to Philadelphia to learn chocolate making under Stephen F. Whitman (he of the familiar yellow-boxed, faux-needlepointed Whitman's Sampler). Among Thompson's fellow apprentices was another young, sweet-toothed go-getter, Milton Hershey.

Returning to Connecticut eight years later, Thompson opened his own confectionary shop at 75 W. Main St. in Meriden, where he advertised a selection of "Cream Walnuts, Bon-Bons, Caramels [and] Chocolates" together with door-to-door ice cream delivery by one-horse wagon. Business was so good that in 1919 Thompson opened a chocolate factory down the street, eventually closing down the retail shop in favor of mass-producing molded chocolate confections.

He was also one of the nation's first chocolate makers to use milk chocolate in his candies, as opposed to the darker, semi-sweet variety only. If you've ever chomped on the end of a quality chocolate cigar, hungrily decapitated a chocolate Santa or blissfully walked down the street with a sackful of gold foil-wrapped chocolate coins jangling in your pocket, chances are they were produced at Thompson Chocolate.

"We make seasonal, novelty chocolates for some of America's best-known chocolate companies," says Thompson CEO Gene Dunkin, whose agreements with those companies prohibited him from naming names. He was, however, able to identify local, high-end outlets across the state where Thompson chocolates are available, such as Fresh Market, Balducci's and Whole Foods. Though not Connecticut's biggest chocolate maker (that honor goes to Munson's, see sidebar), Thompson pumps out a respectable 2.5 million pounds of chocolate products annually.

Aside from their upscale venues, a key

TOM VERDE

TOM VERDE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THOMPSON CHOCOLATE

way to distinguish Thompson-brand novelty chocolates from your average hollow Easter bunny is simple.

"At Thompson, it's always been about better quality, all natural, and even organic, which is not typical of the novelty chocolate business," says Dunkin. So there is a good reason that those other molded chocolate products often taste waxy, bland or about as chocolatey as a doorknob: ingredients.

"Other companies use what is called 'compound chocolate,' which is chocolate that uses some substitute ingredients like vanillin for vanilla or corn syrup instead of cocoa butter," says Dunkin. "It's more cost effective, but it doesn't conform to the standard of true, all-natural chocolate, which is what Thompson produces. We've never used compound chocolate."

You can judge that quality for yourself at the source at the Thompson Factory Store. There you'll find discounted prices on whatever seasonal novelty chocolate items are available: Santas at Christmas, turkeys at Thanksgiving (hand wrapped in imported, colorful European foils), as well as some items you can only buy at the factory, such as a hearty slab of handmade, break-apart chocolate "bark" that has attracted chocolate lovers from all over the country, says Dunkin. Factory store holiday hours during Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The store offers additional hours on the two weekends prior to Christmas. Call ahead before visiting for details.

MORE STOPS ALONG THE CHOCOLATE TRAIL

Bridgewater Chocolate

559 Federal Road, Brookfield
860-775-2286,
bridgewaterchocolate.com

Specialties are English and Irish toffees, as well as a variety of chocolate bark, pretzels, truffles, chocolate-covered marzipan and other European-style confections, inspired by the childhood memories of Swedish transplant and company founder Erik Landgren. At its main factory store on Federal Road in Brookfield, visitors can watch chocolates being made. Bridgewater also has additional retail shops in Brookfield and West Hartford.

Deborah Ann's Sweet Shoppe

381 Main St., Ridgefield
203-438-0065,
deborahanns.com

This colorful, old-fashioned candy shop in the heart of Ridgefield offers fresh cream truffles, peppermint bark, gourmet caramel apples, old-fashioned candy canes and freshly made fudge as well as ice cream. A local favorite.

The Dutch Epicure Shop

491 Bantam Road, Litchfield
860-567-5586, alldutchfood.com

Wolfgang and Betsy Joas opened this bakery and chocolate shop in 1967 after emigrating from Germany. There, Wolfgang had trained as a professional pastry chef, and he brought all of that knowledge and passion to America with him. Their daughter, Wilma, still uses the same recipes pioneered by her dad more than 40 years ago. New candies include raspberry roses, rum runners, milk chocolate honey, ginger giftboxes, soft caramels with sea salt, Cointreau, coffee and cream.

DIVINE TREASURES

Parkade Plaza, 404 Middle Tpke. W., Manchester
860-643-2552, dtchocolates.com

Sharing a similar dedication to quality, though on a much smaller production scale, is the boutiquey Divine Treasures in Manchester. But don't let size fool you. This three-woman operation — owner Diane Wagemann and her two assistants, Roberta Fantasia and Nancy Haddock — produce vegan, gluten-free and processed sugar-free chocolates that attract walk-in customers from Boston to New York and have devoted mail-order clientele and fans as far away as California, including actress and healthy-lifestyle activist Alicia Silverstone.

PETER HVIZDAK

While Wagemann has enjoyed the notoriety, she has stuck pretty close to her French-Canadian roots and the lessons learned as a girl in the Quebec kitchen of her grandmother — her *memere* — who first taught her how to make chocolates.

"Every Sunday, in the wintertime, I would go to her house and we would make all kinds of chocolates that she would then give to the church so they could sell them and pay for their heat," recalls Wagemann.

She says she also spent time in Europe, "eating my way through Belgium and Switzerland," where they know a thing or two about chocolate.

The decision to go vegan was a personal one for Wagemann, for health reasons. The gluten-free element of her recipes comes from using essential flavoring oils, as opposed to processed ones such as vanilla, which can contain gluten. The small kitchen of her Manchester shop is dairy-free; she uses homemade almond and cashew milk instead of cow's milk in her chocolate, and cashew butter for her caramels. Another ingredient you won't find there is white sugar. Instead, she uses turbinado (coarse sugar from the initial pressings of sugar cane), maple syrup and brown rice syrup to sweeten her candies, as well as the finest imported chocolate she can source.

"I am very particular," she says. "Venezuela, Madagascar and Ecuador are producing pretty good chocolate, but right now the beans in Peru are yielding the best quality. Chocolate beans are like fine wine: the grapes matter. The beans from Peru are the fruitiest, and you can almost taste a cherry undertone."

With her grandmother's basic recipes as a launching point, Wagemann has put her refined chocolate palate to good use. Her 10 Million Smooches, for instance — a chocolate-coated concoction of crunchy rice flakes, peanut butter and blond caramel — is an affectionate nod to one of her grandmother's specialties. A former Irish employee collaborated on the Celtic Coffee, a thick, foundational slab of Irish brandy ganache, laced with caramelized hazelnuts, a French delicacy.

Another signature Divine Treasures creation is the Turona, Wagemann's spin on a 16th-century Spanish treat which aristocratic hostesses offered to guests: a base of coconut and almond flour lathered with creamy truffle filling and capped with hard chocolate. And speaking of truffles, don't miss Buddha's Blessing, Prince of India or Egyptian Pyramid, a trio of chocolate truffles molded into the shapes of a rotund Buddha, a turbaned prince and a Giza pyramid, all nuanced with flavors and spices (mango, coconut, cardamom, garam masala) of the Near and Far East.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIVINE TREASURES

COLONIAL COCOA

Connecticut's love affair with chocolate dates back to colonial times. As early as 1768, Nathaniel Jocelin advertised that he had "cocoa for sale at his dwelling … in New Haven," where, by 1775, he was also making and selling chocolates. Cashing in on the nascent nation's growing love for cocoa, Christopher Leffingwell established the colony's first chocolate mill in Norwich in 1770, followed nine years later by neighbor, and competitor, Simon Lathrop. A slightly more expensive alternative to tea, colonial-era cocoa was a somewhat gritty blend of roasted and ground South American cocoa beans, milk, water and sweeteners (usually honey or sugar), with vanilla, nutmeg and/or cinnamon for added depth. Famously enjoyed by the likes of Martha Washington, chocolate was also a standard military ration for her husband's troops and was sold as an over-the-counter medicine at apothecary shops to aid digestion, clear the lungs and even cure hangovers!

PHOTO BY TOM VERDE

Fascia's Chocolates

44 Chase River Road, Waterbury
203-753-0515,
fasciaschocolates.com
Family-owned and operated since 1964, Fascia's offers a wide variety of gourmet chocolates and truffles, as well as "wine-pairing" chocolates matched to wines and spirits and factory tours Saturdays and Sundays, September to June, at 12:30 and 2 p.m. when you can make your own chocolate bar. Get creative!

Grandma Josie's

477 Main St., Monroe
203-590-3301,
grandmajosiescandies.com
Offering candies from yesteryear, enjoy treats such as homemade peanut brittle and almond pattie pies, a selection of chocolates and cones dipped in Belgian chocolate. Grandma Josie's is open all year, six days a week, and Sundays for special reserved gatherings. The sweet shop also offers a light menu and specialty teas and coffees.

Hillside Sweet Shoppe

2 Norwich Road, East Haddam
860-970-5382,
hillsidesweetshoppe.com
For more than 30 years, this small, family-owned confection shop has been providing homemade and other fine chocolates, homemade ice cream and hot fudge, confections, gifts, toys and more. In addition, you can find gifts of chocolate and candy, wedding favors, balloons and themed gift baskets.

Kent Coffee & Chocolate

8 N. Main St., Kent
860-927-1445, kentcoffee.com
Opened in 1991, Kent Coffee & Chocolate sells a wide variety of fine chocolates, including homemade peanut butter cups, a full line of barks, hand-dipped truffles and much more. The menu also features smoothies, raw products including raw cacao nibs, the chocolate hazelnut spread Rawtella and Righteously Raw cacao bars in many flavors, and high-quality coffee and tea.

Roberto Tschudin Lucheme PHOTO BY TOM VERDE

TSCHUDIN CHOCOLATES AND CONFECTIONS

100 Riverview Center (corner of Main and Court streets), Middletown
860-759-2222, tschocolates.com

Crawling even further out on a chocolatey limb (truly, in some cases) is Middletown's eccentric chocolatier, Roberto Tschudin Lucheme of Tschudin Chocolates and Confections.

If life indeed is like a box of chocolates, Tschudin Lucheme's face ought to be on the cover. A Puerto Rican of Swiss ancestry, he has been a circus tightrope walker, a practicing attorney, peddled cubic zirconia watches, worked as a broadcast journalist in Hartford (at WFSB Channel 3) and a firefighter in Glastonbury, where he began dabbling in the restaurant business as an unpaid (and untrained) pastry chef.

A chance recruiting offer from the CIA (not *that* one, though it wouldn't surprise us; the Culinary Institute of America, in New York) in 2009 offered him the opportunity, at age 57, to hone his skills as a budding chocolatier. When a chocolate shop on Main Street in Middletown came up for sale later that year, he ignored his better instincts and dove head first, as it were, into a swirling vat of chocolate and hasn't looked back.

PETER HVIZDAK

Like Wagemann, Tschudin Lucheme insists on all-natural ingredients, and carefully sources his chocolate.

"We pride ourselves on trying to use the top 2 percent of the world's chocolate supply, with chocolate that comes from family farms in Central America, the Caribbean and South America," he says.

He is more broad-minded when it comes to blending that chocolate with flavors that reflect his own eclectic tastes, and adventures, such as his travels throughout North Africa. Thus, his lion-shaped "Night in Tunisia" is infused with classic berbere spices: red chili, fenugreek (a Middle Eastern/Indian spice with bitter overtones of burnt sugar), coriander and ajwain, a member of the caraway family.

"I wanted something that would hit every single sensor on your tongue. Just when you think you know what it tastes like, it changes on you. Then it changes again, and again. It's like a pinball for your taste buds," he says, with a mad-chemist grin.

His heart-shaped, white chocolate-encased "Heartfelt Hope" is a more happy-go-lucky, playful blend of tropical island ingredients: fresh banana, lemon juice and rich, dark rum.

Giving the envelope a surprisingly delicious shove, he created the "First and Last," a layered confection of white chocolate infused with balsamic vinegar and lemon thyme atop a gelée of sun-dried tomatoes.

"Why not? A tomato is actually a fruit," he pointed out.

But Tschudin Lucheme's creative spirit refuses to be confined to the conventional chocolate shop display case. Though he admittedly "flunked finger-painting in kindergarten," this hasn't stopped him from molding and shaping chocolate into

COURTESY OF TSCHUDIN CHOCOLATES AND CONFECTIONS

COURTESY OF TSCHUDIN CHOCOLATES AND CONFECTIONS

unlikely, artistic and edible creations: bamboo poles, luggage tags, 9/11 memorials, mini-submarines and women's pumps, replete with deliciously spikey six-inch heels.

"I think the most ambitious chocolate sculpture I did was for an event for the March of Dimes. It was a full-sized, rocking baby cradle that was made out of chocolate bark, so it looked like mahogany. I even made a marshmallow mattress for it. It was so convincing, people came up and rocked it like a real cradle, not realizing it was chocolate," he says.

THORNCREST FARM MILK HOUSE CHOCOLATES

280 Town Hill Road, Goshen
860-309-2545, milkhousechocolates.net

Far more down to earth, literally, is Thorncrest Farm and Milk House Chocolates in Goshen. Farmers Clint and Kimberly Thorn, together with their sons, Garret and Lyndon, raise and lovingly care for specially selected breeds of milk cows (Holsteins and Jerseys) which daily provide rich, sweet milk that Kimberly uses to make the freshest milk chocolates imaginable.

"Smell the milk in that pail," Garret suggests to a visitor. The heady, sweet aroma of grass that Thorncrest cows grazed on that very morning rises from the bucket, like the smell of spring. Now imagine that flowery scent blending seamlessly with the already intoxicating taste of rich, creamy chocolate and you have an idea of what eating a Thorncrest chocolate candy is like.

"It all begins with the cows," said Kimberly, who conceives and makes all the farm's chocolate creations.

COURTESY OF THORNCREST FARM MILK HOUSE CHOCOLATES

Le Rouge Chocolates & Cakes by Aarti

190 Main St., Westport
203-293-6106, lerougebyaarti.com
This artisan chocolatier offers an eclectic collection of handmade and hand-decorated chocolates and cakes for discerning palates. Everything is gluten-free and made fresh in small batches.

Munson's Chocolates

174 Hop River Road, Bolton
860-649-4332,
munsonschocolates.com
Connecticut's largest retail chocolate manufacturer, with 10 retail outlets across the state. A family business, Munson's makes more than 200 varieties of chocolates, including seasonal, holiday candies.

Plum Brook Chocolate

Woodbury
203-491-6041,
plumbrookchocolate.com
Recently moving production to The Mindful Kitchen in New Preston, a village in Washington, chocolatier Pam Dorgan uses local ingredients whenever possible, such as maple from Brookside Farm II in Litchfield for her Sugar Shed Maple truffle, Hopkins Vineyard's Cabernet Franc for the seasonal Ice Wine truffle and locally sourced butter. Her raspberry pistachio truffle uses fresh jam from Winding Drive Jams & Jellies.

Truffle Shots

1 N. Main St., Essex
860-581-8351, truffleshots.com
The patent-pending creation of Sherri Athay and her daughter Lauren, the silky ganache center of each truffle is contained within a shot glass for an elegant indulgence. Enjoy flavors such as the international award-winning Caramel Beurre Noisette, Tellicherry Cardamom and Signature Dark. Other flavors include Raspberry Kiss, Fig Balsamico, Chipotle Cinnamon, Honey Habanero and more. Truffle Shots contain no alcohol, making them ideal for chocolate lovers of all ages.

COURTESY OF THORNCREST FARM MILK HOUSE CHOCOLATES

PETER HVIZDAK

"Clint will breed them to develop the flavor in the milk that I am after for my ganaches and caramels. So they are based on the natural sweetness that is inherent in each cow and her milk."

Specific breeds, and even specific cows, produce milk that varies in flavor, sweetness and fat content, making them ideal for the specific candies Kimberly has in mind. Daydream, for example — one of a family of Jerseys whose lineage the Thorns can trace back to the eponymous Isle of Jersey in the English Channel — is Kimberly's "caramel girl" whose milk is a key ingredient in Daydream's Butter and Sea Salt "Single Cow Origin" caramels. So naturally sweet is Daydream's milk that Kimberly adds no sugar to the caramels and ganaches she makes with it.

Careful breeding and careful feeding, not to mention a stress-free environment, all contribute to the production of milk sweet enough to make all-natural, sugar-free chocolates. The grass grown on the Thorns' 60 acres of land, where the cows graze at night in summer, when it is cooler, is composed of various types: Timothy, brome, clover, orchard grass and other "secret" species which Clint won't reveal. Certain blends harvested for hay at certain times of year produce certain milk better suited to making light or dark chocolate, says Clint. Meanwhile, Kimberly is no less conscious of the rhythmic cycles of nature and the breeding season of Thorncrest cows when making her chocolates.

"I cook seasonally, but I also cook by cow," she said. "My pumpkin chocolates, for example, are only available from October on through February, when a particular cow is bred to calve-in, so that her milk is best for the fall season."

A local pumpkin grower provides the pie pumpkins for Thorncrest pumpkin chocolates, while Kimberly grows many other ingredients herself, with the exception of the chocolate, of course, which she sources from producers in Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Madagascar. Thus, the lemon mint in her Dark Chocolate Lemon Mints comes from her garden, as does the lavender in her Dark Chocolate Lavenders or the raspberries in "Supreme's" (one of Daydream's barn mates) Dark Chocolate Raspberry Ganache.

Like any good home cook, she often makes creative use of whatever is on hand, and one year produced a San Marzano tomato and horseradish chocolate from a bumper crop of San Marzano tomatoes. Other creative selections from Thorncrest's 92 varieties of handmade, "milk house" chocolates include Black Pepper and Ginger Truffles, dignified Earl Grey Tea Truffles, and, for the holidays, Milk Chocolate Egg Nog and Milk Chocolate Gingerbread chocolates.

But whatever the season, a visit to Thorncrest Farm — where you can tour the barn, say hi to Daydream, and purchase fresh chocolates, not to mention yogurt, artisan cheese and, of course, milk — is an essential stop along Connecticut's deliciously diverse Chocolate Trail.

Clint Thorn feeds the cows at Thorncrest. PHOTO BY TOM VERDE

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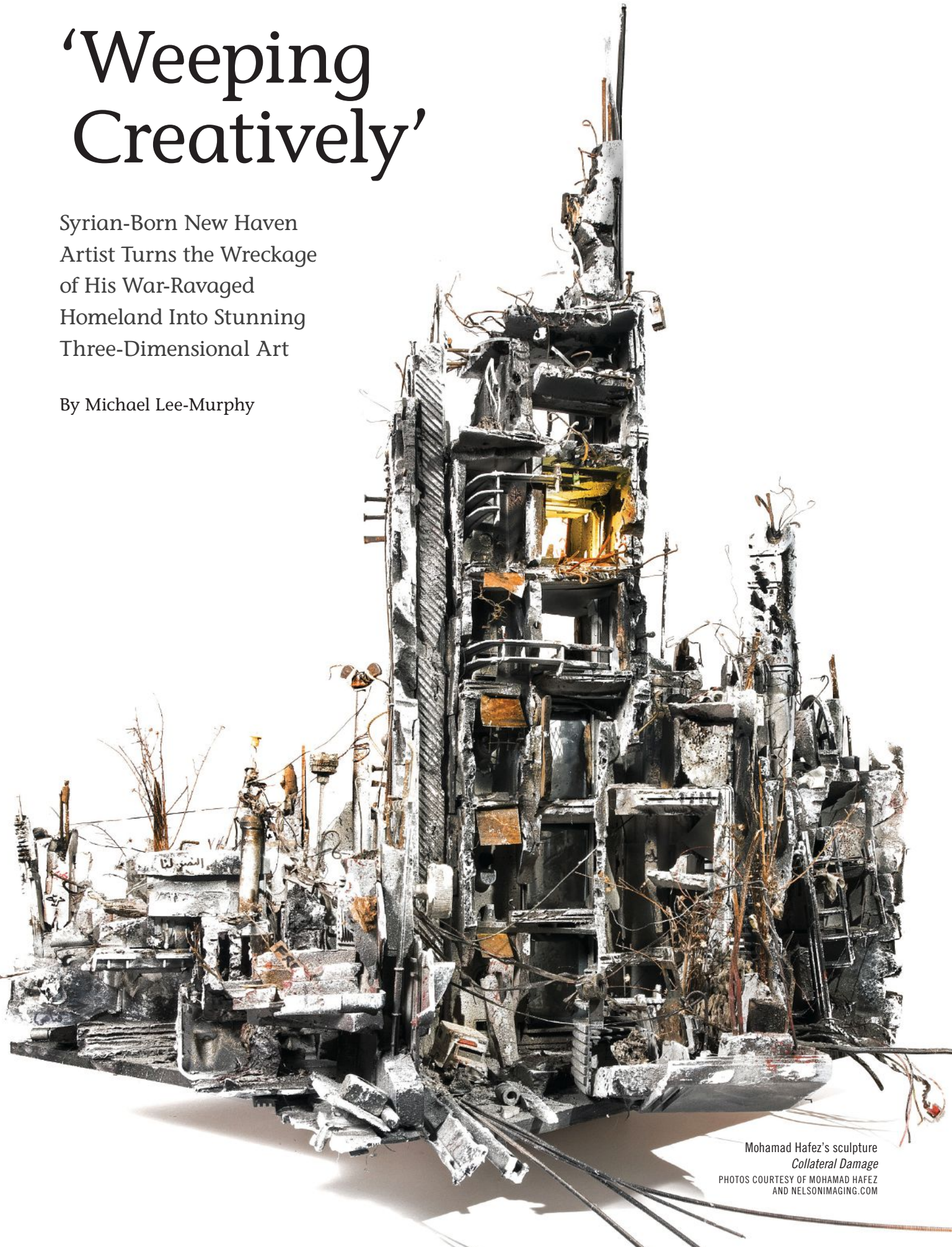
‘Weeping Creatively’

Syrian-Born New Haven Artist Turns the Wreckage of His War-Ravaged Homeland Into Stunning Three-Dimensional Art

By Michael Lee-Murphy



Mohamad Hafez’s sculpture
Collateral Damage
PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOHAMAD HAFEZ AND NELSONIMAGING.COM

Mohamad Hafez makes minor adjustments to his sculpture *Entasarna! (We Have Won!)* in his studio at West River Arts in New Haven. PHOTO BY ARNOLD GOLD

FOR A CASE STUDY IN TRUE heartbreak, observe the way New Haven artist Mohamad Hafez's art has shifted over the years.

The Syrian-born Hafez's earliest works are recreations of small slivers of Syrian street life: tiles made up as photorealistic building facades, complete with the worn look of smears of dirt and the elegant swoop of Arabic graffiti. Hafez's early art was born of the homesickness he felt while studying in the U.S., a longing for the streets of Damascus where he was born. These street facades resemble two-dimensional photographs as much as sculptures. They capture the beauty of street corners we might pass a thousand times, but never appreciate until we leave. This was all before the Syrian civil war began in 2011.

After five years of war — war with destruction scarcely seen since World War II — Syrian cities have taken on a new appearance. Hafez's art has, too. Where once Hafez crafted the facades of streets he loved, he now crafts buildings with facades cut off; destroyed city streets, buildings that are almost — but not

completely — reduced to rubble.

Shortly after Hafez was born in Damascus, his family moved to Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. After coming to the U.S. to study architecture at Iowa State University in 2004, Hafez discovered that his student visa was only valid for a single entry to the U.S. Studying architecture here had been a lifelong dream, and now Hafez was trapped in the dream, unable to return home. It was then that he started to recreate the Syrian streets he held in his mind, from the memories and feelings that all expatriates carry with them. The maturation and evolution of Hafez's artistic style would, however, mirror the descent into war in his homeland. What has resulted is a self-taught artistic form, born of absence and sharpened by mourning.

One of Hafez's most striking works is the 4-foot-by-4-foot sculpture *Entasarna! (We Have Won!)*, constructed from foam pieces, found materials, wires and plaster. To encounter the work is to be viscerally confronted with the physical realities the Syrian civil war has wrought. Miniature steel rebar and concrete frames grasp toward the viewer from an apartment building that has had its face violently sheared off. Television antennas reach skyward, sprouting from collapsed stairwells. On first blush, the work is as complete a portrait of destruction as possible. This is pure horror, we think at first. But Hafez begs us to look closer.

Right in the center of the piece, framed by the rubble, is a single wooden chair. It is missing an arm and sits on a concrete floor, from an apartment now exposed to the outside world. In the multitude of chaos compressed into the work, the chair is the single calm thing. "They are still alive," Hafez says. "Somebody has taken the time to pick up this chair and set it apart from the destruction." This lonely chair is why the title of the piece is a declaration of victory. The chair speaks for the person who might sit in it: I am still here. You have not killed me.

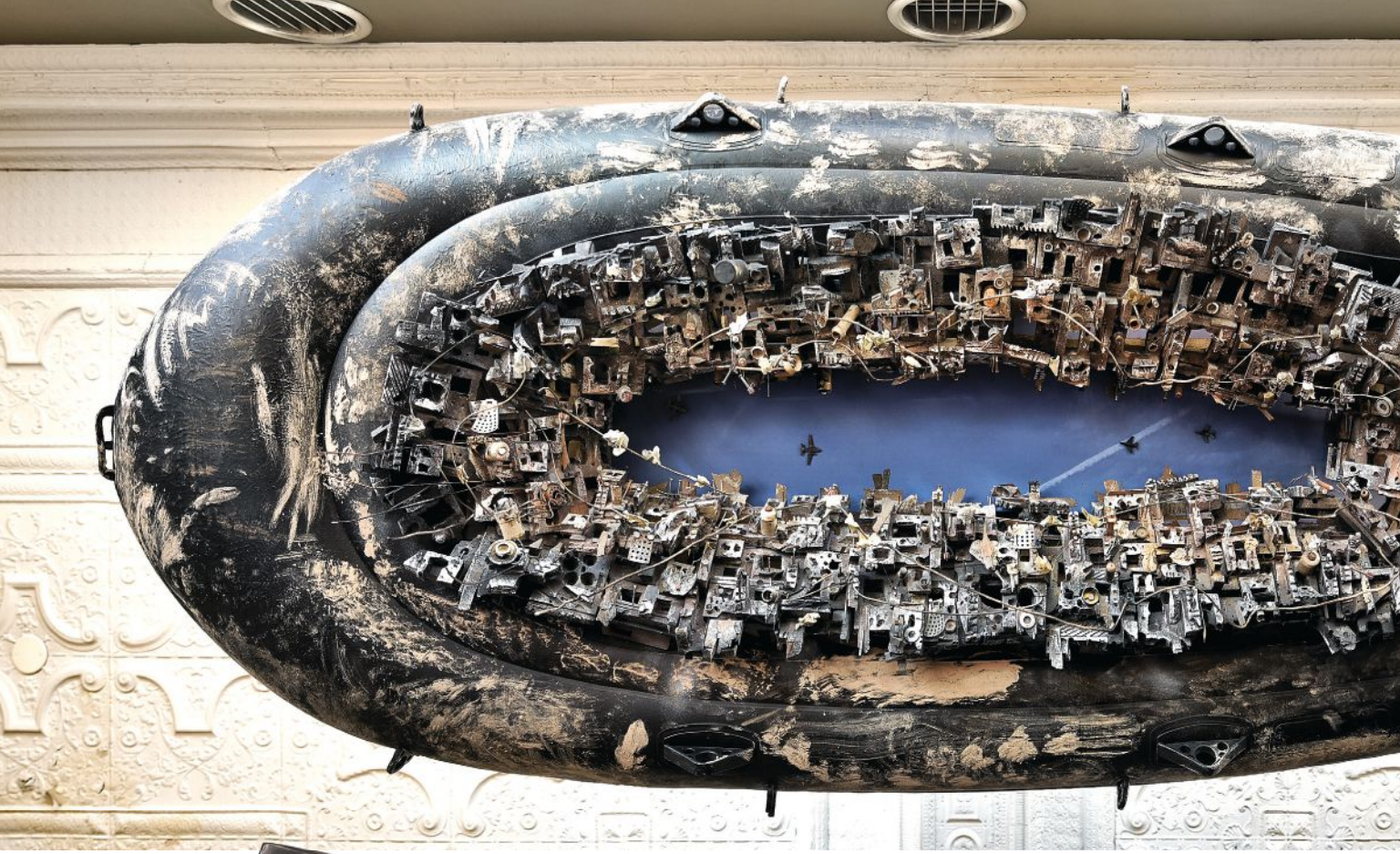
His Royal Highness II; bottom of page, *Unsettled Nostalgia*

By day, the 33-year-old Hafez works as an architect for the prominent downtown New Haven firm Pickard Chilton, where he designs buildings that do not yet exist. As he watches the destruction of his homeland from afar, his mind is full of buildings that no longer exist. And so his art has become a form of therapy.

"You have to acknowledge what we have come to, but there needs to be a way forward," Hafez says. It is a theme that echoes throughout Hafez's work. In one piece, a single light in a wrecked apartment tower is still shining, resisting the darkness of war. In another work, Hafez splashes Arabic graffiti on his structure, reading a popular phrase in today's Syria: "Tomorrow, when things have calmed down …"

The phrase echoes a real-life graffiti that emerged from Aleppo in October. "When the siege breaks, I will ask you to marry me," it reads. For Hafez, there is an almost otherworldly strength exuded in that sentence construction. Like those in Northern Ireland for whom 40 years of fighting was simply *the Troubles*, it refuses to name the fighting even as *war* or *revolution*. It is simply *things*. In planning to do something, to do *anything* "when things have calmed down," is to survive, to know there is life beyond this. Embedded in the phrase is the survival of the mind, as well as the body.

In June of this year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced there are more people currently displaced by wars and persecution in their home countries than at any other time since the agency began keeping records. Many of the displaced are from Syria. Turkey has taken in 2.5 million Syrian refugees, Lebanon has taken over a million and Jordan has taken some 600,000, according to Amnesty International. The U.S. set a goal, which it has now reached, of accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees. Immigrants and refugees have faced a difficult time in the U.S. this year, most visibly when Donald Trump called for a ban on Muslim immigration to the U.S. during his presidential campaign. In the wake of Trump's election, Hafez is anxious and worried about what will come



Above, *Desperate Cargo*. At left, *A Refugee Nation*. Opposite page, top, *Oh My God*.

next, but his goal remains to educate. "I am a Muslim. I am a Syrian. I am Arab. My name is Mohamad. Come meet me," he says.

Several of Hafez's most recent pieces speak to the global refugee crisis. In *Desperate Cargo*, Hafez puts the viewer in the shoes of someone on a Syrian street, gazing skyward. Perhaps we are in eastern Aleppo, long under siege by the Syrian regime and Russian bombing. Hafez's miniature skyline reaches toward the center of an upside-down rubber dinghy, the small rubber boats that have carried many Syrian refugees to the shores of Europe, and many to their deaths in the Mediterranean Ocean. In the small sliver of sky framed by Hafez's miniature city, fighter jets scramble to drop their deadly cargo.

In a series titled *Refugee Nation,* briefcases contain small dioramas of what a refugee might leave behind: a displaced-persons camp, a beautiful piece of furniture, a life.

For Hafez, his work on behalf of refugees extends beyond his art. He assists with the New Haven-based Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, an organization that works to settle Syrians in the New Haven area. Hafez explains that he helps people who may not speak English meet basic settlement needs, from getting a car to an apartment. On a national level, Hafez works with the Maryland-based group Aid All Syrians, whose efforts reach back to Syria itself. The organization has established a school for the children of war who, like all children, still need to learn. Aid All Syrians has also set up nine medical clinics to provide primary care. Hafez recently received a collection of drawings from the students at the school, which he will be selling for $100 apiece. The cost of each drawing will fund a child's education for a year. Children who have known only war, Hafez says, have drawn bombings and fighter jets. The drawings are on sale through the website aidallsyrians.org. While Hafez is not selling his large works, as he envisions them occupying a museum space eventually, he is selling some of his smaller works.

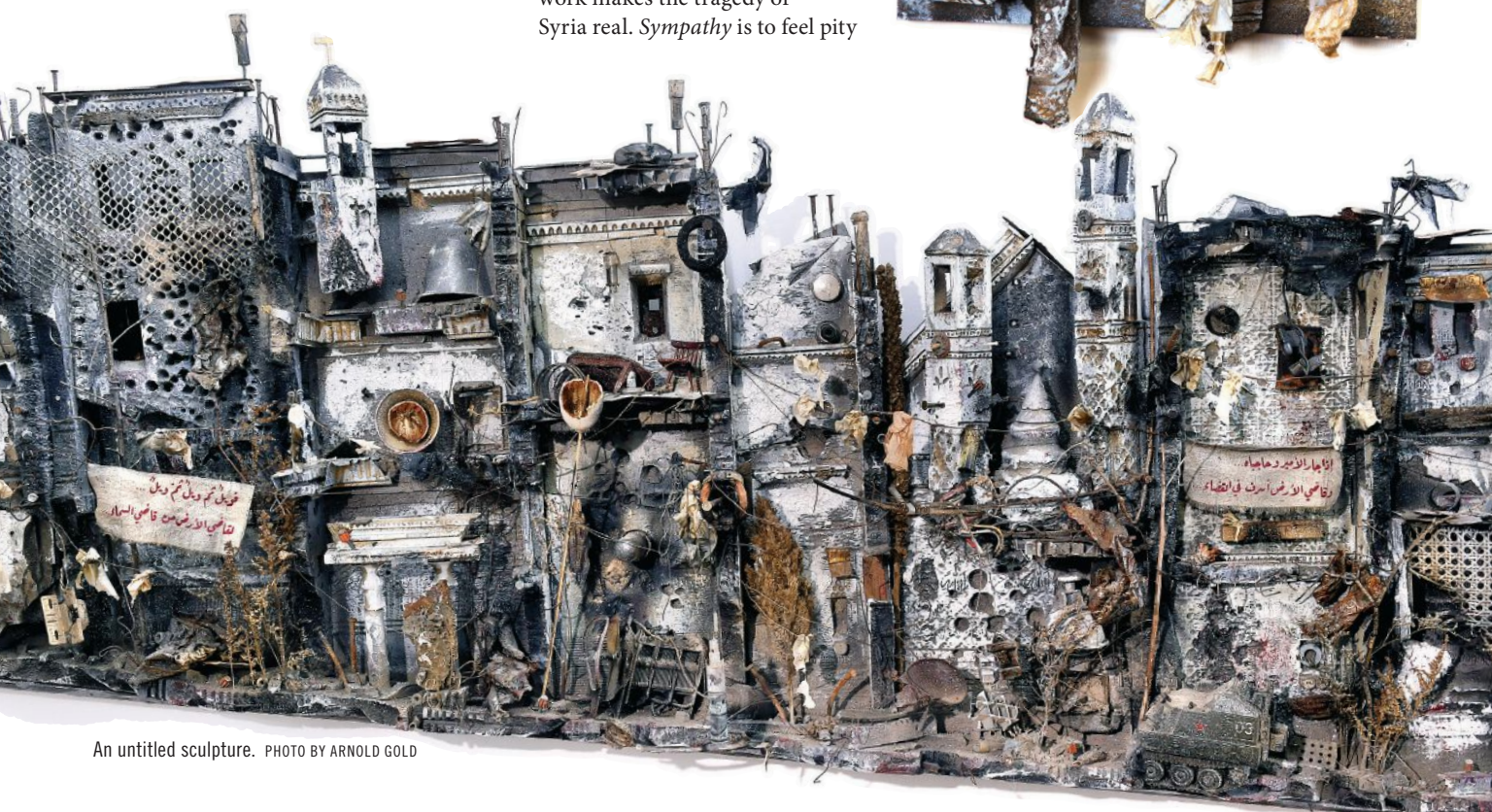
Of the roughly 150 artists on display at New Haven's Goffe Street armory for the mid-October edition of the City-Wide Open Studios festival, Hafez's showcase was among the most arresting.

He explains that while "nothing is more precious than human life in conflicts," it is the role of people like himself to expand our understanding of war. "Some of us … have to weep about the culture, and the architecture, and the archaeology that's being decimated in front of our eyes. And that's what I see really myself as doing right now. I am mourning and weeping creatively over the loss and the death of my country."

The German philosopher and critic Walter Benjamin, himself a Jewish refugee from the march of fascism, famously wrote about what it is to bear witness. He embedded his philosophy in a character he called the Angel of History: "His face is turned towards the past. Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet. He would like to pause for a moment so fair, to awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed. … The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high." Hafez's art is pushing forward, helping the viewer understand, creating conversation and dialogue about refugees and war and survival. While the art pushes us forward, it faces behind, ever mindful of the destruction it represents.

The early years of the Syrian war were paralysis for Hafez. "The first couple years of the war, I didn't pick a pencil up. … I felt that my hand was really cast in concrete." We are lucky that Hafez did eventually pick up a pencil to sketch his models of the Syrian war. Perhaps more than the news stories, more than the policy debates, more than the pictures flooding our screens every day, Hafez's work makes the tragedy of Syria real. *Sympathy* is to feel pity and sorrow for the difficulties of another. *Empathy* goes further — it is the ability to understand another, and to share the same feelings. The latter is harder to come by. Mohamad Hafez's art helps get us there.

MohamadHafez.com
AidAllSyrians.org



An untitled sculpture. PHOTO BY ARNOLD GOLD

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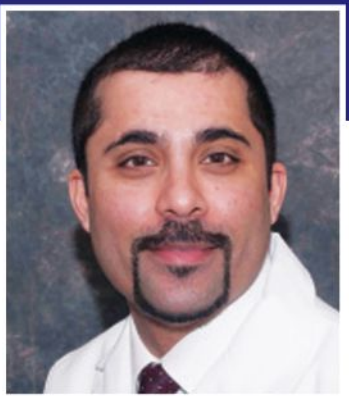

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The evening was filled with wonderful clients, fantastic hors d'oeuvres, fun games, and music. We truly appreciate your continuing support and we look forward to many more years to come. We also would like to thank you for helping us contribute to The Bennett Cancer Center and Paint the Town Pink, which stresses the importance of breast cancer screening and early detection. What a beautiful evening we had with you all, we couldn't have done it without you!
The success of the evening leaves us counting the days until next year for even more memories and celebrating.
See you for a night you won't want to miss!

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WEEKLY ★BEST★ OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY READERS' POLL 2012

THE 2016 GIFT

1

2

3

HOLIDAY GUIDE

1 WOODEN TREE ADVENT CALENDAR
Count down with 24 little drawers to fill with holiday treats, nside each drawer measures 1 1/2" x 1 3/4", $78, QueenvannaCreations, Granby, *queenvannacreations.etsy.com*

2 JERUSALEM STONE MENORAH
Imported from Israel, $180, Congregation B'nai Jacob, Woodbridge, *bnaijacob.org*

3 SANTA SACK AND 4 OPERA CLUTCH
Courtesy of Hartford Denim Co., aka HARDENCO, 860-880-0495, hartforddenim@gmail.com, workshop+showroom: 30 Bartholomew Ave., Hartford, *hardenco.com*

See inside the gift guide for info on other items shown.

PHOTO BY ARNOLD GOLD

Give the Gift

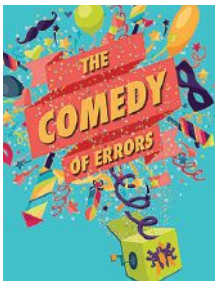
GIVE THE GIFT OF COFFEE

You can hire The Buzz Truck to make a special stop. It delivers organic, small-batch roasted coffee, assorted tea, hot cocoa, freshly baked breakfast treats and desserts from the best of what's local. The Buzz Truck is available for events of all sizes: sporting events, weddings, family reunions, meetings, PTA fundraisers, office stops, employee appreciation, Teacher Appreciation Week and birthday parties of all ages. $125-$350, Southport, 646-256-2003, *thebuzztruck.com*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

by William Shakespeare, directed by Darko Tresnjak. From the director of highly praised productions of *Romeo & Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* comes Shakespeare's zaniest comedy, in which two sets of twins separated at birth find themselves in the same city on the same day. Each pair is unaware the other is nearby. This leads to a string of mistaken identities, which explode into outrageous slapstick, false accusations, crackling word play and even demonic possession. A rollicking farce of Shakespearean proportion. Jan. 12-Feb. 12, $25-$90, Hartford Stage, 50 Church St., Hartford, 860-520-7114, *hartfordstage.org*

HARTFORD STAGE



FENWAY PARK SUITE

Whether on its own or paired with tickets and a tour of Fenway, the iconic home of the Boston Red Sox, this experience is sure to wow any fanatic. Give the sports lover in your life the ultimate gift: an overnight stay in the new Fenway Park Suite at Hotel Commonwealth, with a direct view of the park. Have the World Series trophy delivered to the suite to hold and take selfies with. The turndown service: a little bag of Fenway dirt on your pillow. Starting at $749/night, Hotel Commonwealth, 500 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, 617-933-5000, *hotelcommonwealth.com*

HELICOPTER FLYING LESSON OVER NY/CT

Ever dream of being a helicopter pilot? Your first lesson begins with a 30-minute ground briefing covering helicopter flight controls, flying techniques and safety procedures. You will then join a professional flight instructor for a one-on-one flight departing from Westchester County Airport. You will get the chance to take control of a helicopter while taking in views of Westchester County, the New York/Connecticut coastline and the Hudson River. No prior training or flying experience necessary. $315-$605, White Plains, N.Y., 914-202-3440, *wingsair.net*

Water's Edge RESORT & SPA

Welcoming Families for Over 30 Years.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Overnight package includes luxurious room, $100 resort credit for The Spa at Water's Edge or Dattilo Fine Italian restaurant, $219, available seven days a week, through April 30, 2017, Water's Edge Resort & Spa, 1525 Boston Post Road, Westbrook, *watersedgeresortandspa.com*

TASTE of NEW HAVEN
Food & Drink Tours
www.tasteofnewhaven.com

CULINARY WALKING TOUR GIFT CERTIFICATE FOR TWO

Choose your path through New Haven's culinary oasis and join others as you embark on a journey filled with food, drink, history, culture and fun! Regularly scheduled tours run most weekends throughout the year. $110, Taste of New Haven, 96 Blake St., New Haven, 203-710-3710, *tasteofnewhaven.com*

THE REVITALIZER DAY SPA PACKAGE

Give the gift of relaxation. Revitalizer Day Spa Package includes: Choice of one 50-minute service and one 25-minute service or a pedicure; one fitness class of your choice; lunch in Kensington's Restaurant; spa boutique item to take home; full use of the spa facility including sauna, steam room, whirlpool, indoor pool, relaxation room, fitness center, robe, slippers and locker room. Daily complimentary options include morning walk, morning meditation, makeup color analysis Q&A, Spa 101, afternoon tea and scones and wine tasting. Packages start at $191, The Spa at Norwich Inn, 607 W. Thames St., Norwich, 860-425-3500, *thespaatnorwichinn.com*

The Spa at Norwich Inn

VISNAPUU DESIGN GIFT CERTIFICATES

Green gift certificates are all about the gift of giving. From a splendid $25 bag of bulbs and stunning bouquets to garden overhauls and complete landscape re-designs. Live, love and elevate your lifestyle. Starting at $25, Weston, 203-217-7406; *visnapuudesign.com*

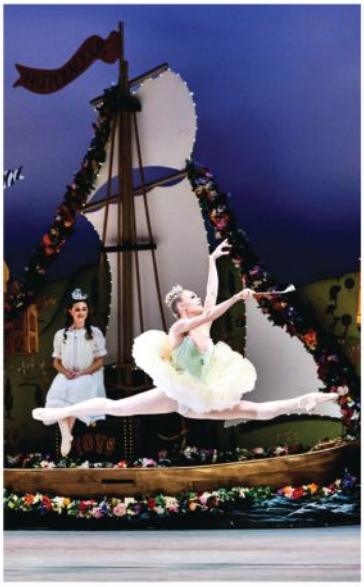
HANDS-ON, GUIDED FARM TOUR

Guests will enjoy a hike around a 100-acre animal farm during which they will feed, hold and pet the animals. Farm animals include horses, goats, pigs, chickens, rabbits and cows. Go to the website for farm pictures and descriptions. $100 for up to 15 people, additional cost for more people, Cheshire Hollow Farm, 1559 Peck Lane, Cheshire, 203-500-9288, *cheshirehollowfarm.webs.com*

CHESHIRE HOLLOW FARM

Art + Soul

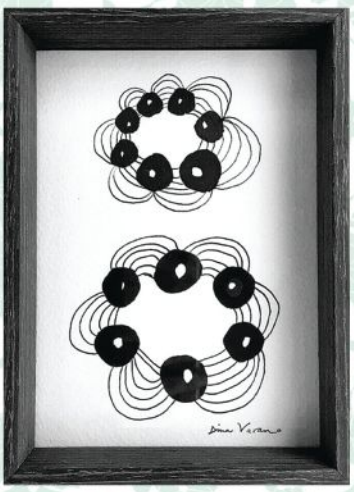
STEAK FLIGHT TASTING MENU GIFT CERTIFICATE Four-course steak flight tasting menu from the award-winning steakhouse at Foxwoods Resort Casino: Includes two starter courses, a dessert course and a sampling of the following dry-aged steaks: 30-day bone-in Kansas City strip, 40-day ribeye, 60-day sirloin, 75-day ribeye. $100 not including beverage, tax or gratuity; email steakflight@craveablehg.com for purchasing. David Burke Prime Steakhouse, Mashantucket, 860-312-8753, *davidburkeprime.com*



EASTERN CONNECTICUT BALLET'S THE NUTCRACKER at the Garde Arts Center in New London on Dec. 10 at 1:30 and 7 p.m. and Dec. 11 at 1:30 p.m. The glittering star power of "the great American ballerina of our time," Sara Mearns of New York City Ballet will perform as the Sugar Plum Fairy along with her NYCB co-star Jared Angle. Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra performs Tchaikovsky's musical masterpiece. $39 to $49 for adults, $22 to $29 for children and special rates for military, seniors and groups; *tickets.gardearts.org* or call 860-444-7373, ext. 1, Eastern Connecticut Ballet, 435 Boston Post Road, East Lyme, 203-415-9004, *easternctballet.com*

ORIGINAL CUSTOMIZED ART Commission original portraits or custom art in all shapes and sizes in any media, starting at $500, Blue Eyed Dingo, Stamford, *gigibarrett.com*

CUSTOM HOUSE PORTRAIT A great gift for someone who loves their house, and all the memories and future plans it holds, it can also be drawn and painted with holiday decorations, $150, Melley Nelson Design, West Hartford, 860-878-0517, *melleynelsondesign.com*



DINA VARANO "INTUITIVE NATURE DRAWING" Original ink drawing by artist Dina Varano in 5"x7" wooden shadowbox frame, $65, Dina Varano Gallery, Chester, 860-526-8866, *dinavarano.com*

FRAMED CANVAS GICLEE PRINTS Charming, beautiful 6"x6" framed giclee prints with bio of artist on the back, $34.50, Queen Street Gifts & Treats, Newtown, 203-304-9755, *queenstreetgifts.com*

For the Home

HAND-FLOURISHED HOLIDAY ORNAMENTS $20 and up, *lisafatone artdesign.com*

DONNA VISTA BATH ENSEMBLE $15.99-$39.99, *bedbathandbeyond.com*

GRANITE COUNTER SPRAY $9 for 16-oz. spray bottle, *homeprepproducts.com*

1950s PAYPHONE Vintage-inspired payphone, Crosley Radio, $89.95, *crosleyradio.com*

VAN GOGH'S WINTER ORNAMENT By Christina's World, $48, The Pink Sleigh, *pinksleigh.com*

CONNECTICUT EMBROIDERED CUSHION COVER Cotton/linen blended, sizes 16", 18", 20" square, JAWdecor, $28.50, *etsy.com/hk-en/shop/JAWdecor*

VASES Handmade and signed blown glass, 17-inch vase by Arkansas Artisans, $79.98, *designforumgallery.com*

PERSONALIZED WINE BOTTLE HURRICANE LANTERN $25-$75, *wordcouture.com*

HAND-ROLLED BEESWAX CANDLES Available in 3-inch, 6-inch and 8-inch sizes, $14-$28, Little Bee of Connecticut, *littlebeeofct.com*

PET ODOR ELIMINATOR MASON JAR SOY CANDLE Orange, grapefruit, cinnamon, $21.50, CT River Candles, *ctrivercandles.com*

LAVENDER + ROSEMARY SOY CANDLE Lead-free and vegan, 8-oz. soy candle, Cottagewicks, $24, *cottagewicks.com*

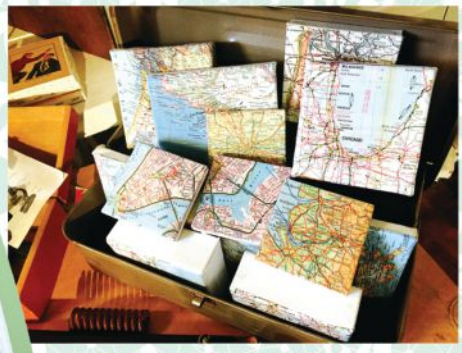
ITALIAN HERRINGBONE THROWS Cashmere-soft and lightweight, available in more than 35 colors, Lands Downunder, $94.50, *maggiesofmadison.com*

GELPRO DECORATOR COLLECTION LUXURY COMFORT MAT Made in the U.S., prices start at $119.95 for a 20"x36" mat, $159.95 for a 20"x 48" mat, $239.95 for a 20"x72" mat, and $549.95 for a 30"x108" mat, *gelpro.com*

ANCHOR MINI CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT
Glass ball, 1.25-inch diameter, $5.95, Painted by the Shore, *paintedbytheshore.com*

LEGO WREATH ORNAMENT
$19.99, Brick & Button, *brickandbutton.com*

ROWBOAT BOOKSHELF
Wooden 4-foot shelf made by the Amish in Pennsylvania, $225, other sizes available, Against the Grain, *shopthegrain.com*



MINI VINTAGE MAP ART Ready to hang, $8-$12, various sizes, Blaze and Bloom Vintage, *blazeandbloom.com*

ALPACA WOOL DRYER BALLS
3 jumbo, locally sourced, handmade balls, $24, Flatland Alpacas, *etsy.com/shop/FlatlandAlpacas*

HANDMADE PAPER NOTECARDS
With marigold inclusions, set of 4, $14, PaperScape, *paperscapeartworks.com*

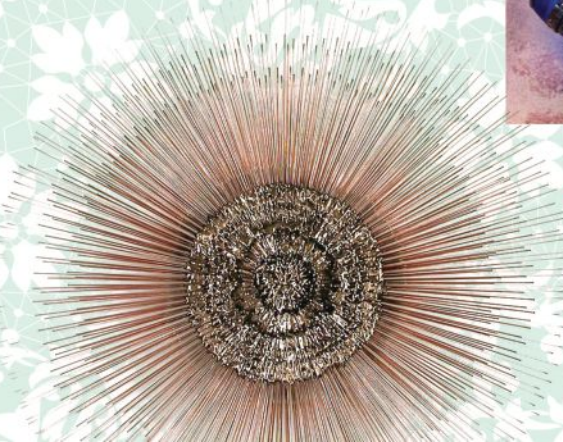
T-SHIRT MEMORY QUILT 100% customizable & backed with cozy fleece, $500, Bitty Birdie Design, *bittybirdie.com*

SQUIRREL BUSTER PLUS The Fat Robin, $89.95, 203-248-7068, *fatrobin.com*

HAND-PAINTED BLOCK HOUSE
Inspired by the Mark Twain House, by Sally Sargent Markey, $75, Granby Pharmacy, *granbypharmacy.com*

HAND-BLOWN GLASS KALEIDOSCOPE
Two-mirror scopes available in various sizes and colors by Lotus Scopes, $300-$500, Bodhi Tree Gallery, *bodhitree gallery.com*

WICKED WARMERS Cotton flannel, muslin lining, stuffed with flaxseed, choice of 10 fabrics, as well as vanilla, lavender, or unscented options, approximately 3.5"x3.5", $15, Payne & Comfort, *payneandcomfort.com*



SUNBURST WALL ART SCULPTURE
Solid bronze center, 30- or 42-inch diameter; $1,250, Bovano of Cheshire, 203-272-3208, *bovano.com*

Scents of the season

LEMON LAVENDER SCRUB & LIP BALM
$3.95-$19.95, In the Buff, by Dory, *inthebuffbydory.com*

BLUE VIOLET PERFUME
Soft and sophisticated sexy combined with a dry floral aphrodisiac jasmine sambac and the fresh citrus aroma of the Japanese yuzu, vegan, $98, VERED Organic Botanicals, *veredbotanicals.com*

SOAP + WASHCLOTH GIFT SET
$16.50, Treefort Naturals, *treefortnaturals.com*

HONEYSUCKLE BATH SALTS
8-oz. container, $25, Solstice Handcrafted, *solsticehandcrafted.com*

SOLID PERFUME Half-oz., four scents, $10, Little Bee of Connecticut, *littlebeeofct.com*

HANDMADE SOAP AND LIP BALM Various soap fragrances, peppermint lip balm, prices vary, Bee Girl Soap, *beegirlsoap.com*

GOAT MILK SOAP + HAND AND BODY BUTTER
Fair trade oils, farm-raised raw goat milk and organic herbs, soap (4 oz.) $6.26, body butter $11, Lyric Hill Farm, Granby, *lyrichillfarm.com*

ALMOND CREAM FACE AND BODY SOAP Rich, creamy, luxurious lather will leave your skin feeling moisturized, blended with oatmeal, almond milk and oil of avocado, $15, Brosily Bath and Body, *brosilybathandbody.com*

GIANT LIP BALM
From fair trade and organic butters and oil, unrefined beeswax and essential oils for flavor, six flavors, $8, Olive My Skin, *olivemyskin.com*

PAPER WOLF COLOGNE
Pure essential oils diluted in distilled water and perfumer's-grade alcohol made from organic cane sugar, roll-on, $48, Old Factory, *oldfactorysoap.com*

GOATS MILK SOAP Assortments include gift sets and molded holiday soaps, prices vary, Goatboy Soaps, New Milford, *goatboy.us*

CAREFREE NATURALS SIMPLY UNSCENTED BARRIER CREAM
Handcrafted in small batches in Connecticut, made with calendula- & chamomile-infused olive oils, shea butter and zinc oxide, $18, sold exclusively at Nurture Nest, Niantic, *nurturenestct.com*

CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE AND AMATO'S TOY AND HOBBY OF NEW BRITAIN teamed up this holiday season to donate the board games below to the Child Life Program at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital for kids to play with while they are in the hospital. We thank all of our game sponsors for their generous donations to help kids in need have a better holiday.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Banagrams
Endless Games
Gamewright
Peaceable Kingdom
Ravensburger
ScienceWhiz
Set Enterprises
ThinkFun
Wood Expressions

PHOTO BY CATHERINE AVALONE

For those in need

KIEHL'S LIMITED EDITION GIFT SET 100% of sales of this collection will benefit Feeding America, providing 1.1 million meals to families this holiday season. This set of hydration essentials includes Creme de Corps, Ultra Facial Cream, Daily Reviving Concentrate and a FAILE sticker, $45 ($45 = 415 meals), Kiehl's, *kiehls.com*

BASKETWEAVE SHAWL 70% cashmere, 30% silk basketweave shawls, handwoven in Nepal, 12 colors, 28" x 78", portion of the sales is used to send working street children in Afghanistan to school, $135, ZAANHA, *zaanha.com*

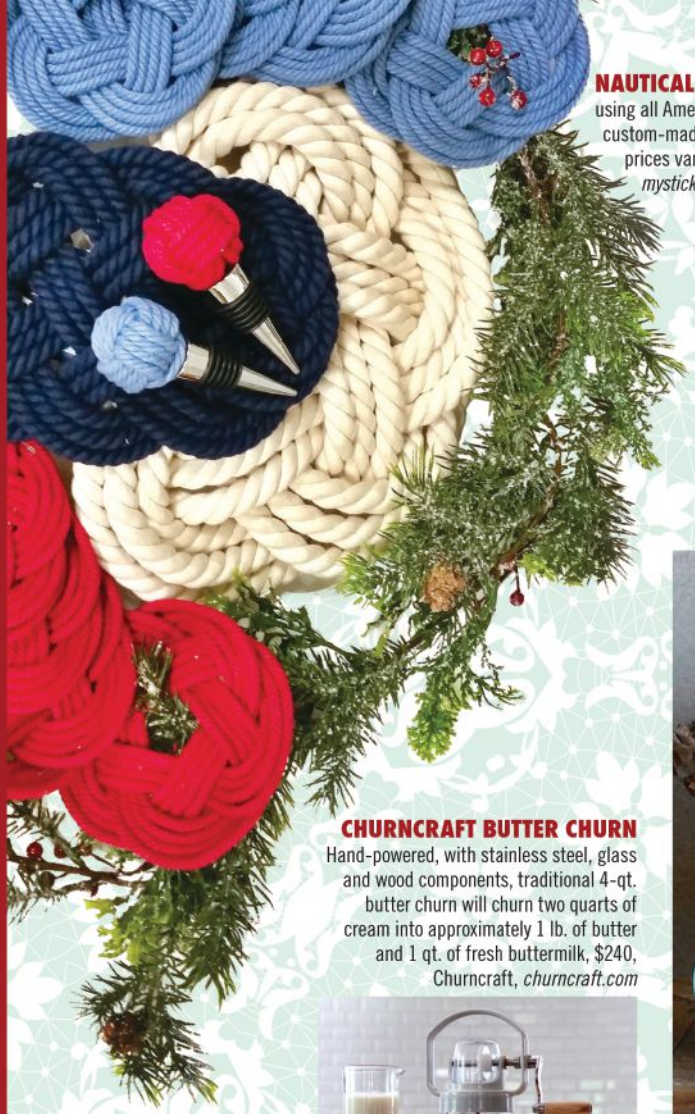
CONNECTICUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS Support Special Olympics Connecticut during the holiday season by making a donation in honor or in memory of someone dear to you. A Penguin Plunge Unified Art Card (left) will be sent out to the person being honored with a note inside saying a donation was made in their name to Special Olympics CT. *soct.org*

STAND UP TO CANCER Share a message of support for survivors and all those touched by cancer while supporting accelerated cancer research. Women's "We Used To Have Such Crazy Dreams" TEREZ PERFORMANCE LEGGINGS $78. YOGA MAT, STRAP & CARRYING CASE bright orange yoga mat, carrying strap, handy cloth bag and stainless steel water bottle, $69.95. ROAM ROPES BLUETOOTH EARPHONES ROPES are light, powerful and comfortable and deliver* precision sound through the ROAM EQ, iOS and Android compatible, $199. PEMBERLY NOTEBOOK WITH PEN $19.95. *shopsu2c.org*

YaleNewHavenHealth
Yale New Haven Children's Hospital

YALE NEW HAVEN CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL WISH BOOK

A visit to the hospital is especially stressful when the patient is a child. The annual Wish Book offers dozens of items that help the youngest patients and their families get through the toughest experiences of their lives. It lists dozens of items that you can choose to help the youngest patients and their caregivers feel better during a stay in the hospital. Wish Book items, given in honor of someone you love, make fantastic holiday gifts. If you're a parent or teacher, the Wish Book is a wonderful way to teach your kids about empathy and the joy of giving. It's perfect for classroom activities, school clubs, religious school service projects, Scouts, or for anyone who wants to experience how great it feels to give. *ynhhwishbook.org*



NAUTICAL KNOTS Handmade using all American cotton and custom-made rope and cord, prices vary, Mystic Knotwork, *mysticknotwork.com*

AMERICAN HEIRLOOM'S CONNECTICUT CUTTING BOARD
Made with butcher block architectural plywood from rapidly renewable bamboo, available in amber, optional engraving details, $48, American Heirloom, *aheirloom.com*

CHURNCRAFT BUTTER CHURN
Hand-powered, with stainless steel, glass and wood components, traditional 4-qt. butter churn will churn two quarts of cream into approximately 1 lb. of butter and 1 qt. of fresh buttermilk, $240, Churncraft, *churncraft.com*

CUSTOM RECIPE PLATTER Transfer your scanned image to a ceramic plate or platter, food, oven and microwave safe, $50, ArtSmith, *artsmithshop.com*

WINE CRATE SIDE TABLE Hardwood legs and Italian marble top, each piece uses original French wine crates and is hand made and hand signed under the table, 22x23x15 in., $450, Essence of Provence, *essenceofprovence.com*

WAX POTTERY Scented wax vessels, no burning needed, $29.50, Habersham Candle, Queen Street Gifts & Treats, *queenstreetgifts.com*

SOLID WOOD SALAD AND SERVING BOWLS
One-of-a-kind and made from locally fallen trees in western Massachusetts, food safe, treated with beeswax and mineral oil, $65-plus, Peterman's Boards & Bowls, Fairhaven Furniture, *fairhaven-furniture.com*

BIRD'S NEST BOWLS
Contemporary, hand-blown glass bowls available in a range of colors and sizes, $190-$450, Viscosity Studios, AXEL Interiors, *axelinteriors.com*

WOOD BEER CARRIER WITH BOTTLE OPENER
BYOB in style, $55, Hempstock Studios, *HempstockStudios.etsy.com*

For the Hostess

ETCHED MARBLE PASTRY BOARD Engraved with a fern design, $120, Denise O'Reilly Artist, *theburntshop.com*

HAND-CRAFTED POTTERY OLIVE OIL DECANTERS Hand-thrown so each piece is one of a kind, $28, ArtFish 42, *artfish42.com*

THE BOOZE DISPENSER Stone drink dispenser, $125, Helen Ainson, *helenainson.com*

SALAD TONGS Stainless steel spring and brass hinge pin, 11.5"x 2", opens to 5", $85, Meb's Kitchenwares, *mebskitchenwares.com*

PERSONALIZED HOUSEWARES Platters, wine glasses, tumblers, etc., Ready-made styles available, $10-$60, Periwinkles, *Facebook: periwinklesct*

POLYCHROME BOWL SET Five rich polychrome glazes, can be used for desserts, rice, condiments, nuts, ice cream and more, set of five 3½-inch bowls, $70, Middle Kingdom Porcelains, Mix Design Store, *mixdesignstore.com*

FRESH WRAPS Natural, reusable, materials: cotton, beeswax and jojoba oil, $12-$22, W+E Coastal, *wecoastal.etsy.com*

MARY CHICKEN TEA TOWEL Hickster's mascot, Red Mary with black hipster glasses on a red, green, yellow and blue striped 18"x28" cotton tea towel, $14, Hickster Tees, *etsy.com/shop/HicksterTees*

ADMIRAL'S GLASS Luxury glassware engraved with longitude and latitude, German unleaded Stolzle crystal, 11-oz. double old fashioned, engraved up to four lines, set of 4, $110, North by Northeast Enterprises, *nxnortheast.com*

NORA FLEMING SERVEWARE Ceramic serving dishes and home accessories customizable for various occasions through the use of interchangeable decorative "minis," $20-$30-plus, minis sold separately, Elegant Touch Fine Gifts, *elegantouchfinegifts.net*

MODERN ARCHITECTURE RECYCLED FLOUR SACK TEA TOWEL OF PIRELLI/RUBBER ARMSTRONG BUILDING Hand-drawn sketch of the Marcel Breuer-designed Pirelli Building near Ikea, hand-stamped, 100% cotton, 30 inches square, $12, Block to Block, *blocktoblockshop.com*

CONNECTICUT TEA TOWELS 100% cotton flour sack tea towel, hand drawn, screen printed, $14, &Morgan, *andmorgan.etsy.com*

FOX TEA TOWEL Hand-printed flour sack, 100% cotton, unbleached, 29 inches square, $18, FuzzyMug, *fuzzymug.etsy.com*

Flaunt it

EMERALD AND DIAMOND 18K YELLOW GOLD DANGLE EARRINGS One with minor clarity enhancements and one with moderate clarity enhancement, both GIA certified, from the Peter Suchy workshop, $80,000, Peter Suchy Jewelers, *petersuchyjewelers.com*

NEW LONDON VINTAGE MAP CUFF BRACELET 1935 map includes the area along the shore of the Thames River and New London Harbor, the State Pier, Coast Guard Base and Coast Guard Academy, New London Lighthouse, Ocean Beach and more, $31, December Moon Design, *etsy.com/shop/decembermoondesign*

UNO DE 50 JEWELRY Handcrafted in Spain, features Swarovski crystals, Murano glass beads and sterling silver plating, $69-plus, Uno de 50, The Red Owl Jewelry & Gifts, *redowlgifts.com*

DOT DOME RING with malachite sterling silver and 18k bonded yellow gold ring with malachite, part of the brand's iconic Dot collection, measures 4.5mm to 19mm wide, $995 **MODERN CHAIN STERLING SILVER BRACELET** 9mm wide with gold pusher clasp, $1,195, Lux Bond & Green, *johnhardy.com*

CHAINMAILLE-STYLE SEA GLASS BRACELET Made with 16 multicolored pieces of blue, turquoise and green sea glass with freshwater pearls and aqua-, sapphire-, buttercup- and mint-colored beads, sterling silver, $150, Sea Glass Designs, *sea-glass-designs.com*

FIRE OPAL & RUBELLITE CATHERINE EARRINGS Platinum, rubellite (7.77 carats), fire opal (4.28 carats) and diamond (3.81 carats), $112,000, L'Armoire, *larmoirenewcanaan.com*

TOURMALINE NECKLACE IN YELLOW GOLD Multi-colored tourmaline gems dangle from a 14k yellow gold chain, $980, Amy Hsu, Ruby's Jewelers, *rubysjewelers.com*

HANDCRAFTED BEACH STONE & PEARL BROOCHES Small beach stones set in sterling or antiqued silver brooch/pendants, embellished with freshwater pearls, crystals and sterling starfish & dragonfly charms, $48, Creek Chic Designs, *creekchic.com*

ROOTS BANDS Overlapping "roots" encircle your finger in this wide sterling silver ring, handcrafted in wax and cast in sterling silver, sizes 5-11, appx. 7/16" wide, $95, Erin DeLuca Jewelry, *erindeluca.com*

OYSTER SHELL DISH TRINKET DISH Made from oyster shells, $5, Kathy Ungerleider, Granby Pharmacy, *granbypharmacy.com*

HANDPAINTED WILDFLOWER NECKLACE Wearable original art featuring a miniature painting, flowers in a whimsical garden inspire each handpainted pendant, $28, Wren in a Willow, *wreninawillow.com*

PEARL EARRINGS Cultured pearls, made with vintage brass flower stampings and vintage bead caps, lever-back ear wires make sure they stay safely in your ears, $22, The Tiny Wren, *thetinywren.etsy.com*

SILVER HEART NECKLACE Hand formed with fine silver clay that is kiln fired, polished and lightly oxidized, hangs from an 18-inch, 1.2mm sterling silver box chain, 5/8" in diameter, $45, InDee Designs, *etsy.com/shop/InDeeDesigns*

DINA VARANO NECKLACE Handmade 14k gold necklace with 14k gold horseshoe pendant and cluster of multi-colored sapphires, $670, Dina Varano Gallery, *dinavarano.com*

SNOWFLAKE JEWELRY SET Blue snowflakes framed with sterling silver settings, cotton fabric, aluminum cover buttons (made in the U.S.), and sterling silver settings (nickel free), $19.99 per piece, $34.99 for two pieces, $49.99 for three pieces, Brick & Button, *brickandbutton.com*

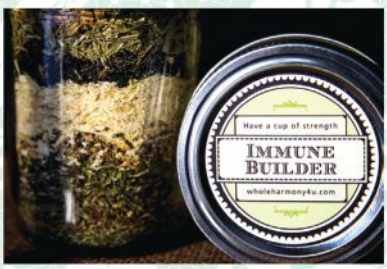
TOPPERFINO Premium Belgian dark chocolate finished with a unique edible design, place Topperfino on a cup of coffee, hot chocolate or even oatmeal, $13.99 per box of 10, choice of designs, *topperfino.com*

LITERARY TEAS Inspired by authors' works and lives, collection of 12 teas, featured authors: Louisa May Alcott, Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters, Lewis Carroll, Charles Dickens, Emily Dickinson, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, James Joyce, Edgar Allan Poe, Beatrix Potter, William Shakespeare and Walt Whitman, $9.75 per 4-oz. tin, Simpson & Vail, *svtea.com*

Flavor your holiday

ARNOLD GOLD

COOKIE GIFT BOXES Holiday cookies handmade from scratch, ideal for hostesses, corporates, teachers, etc., $15-$85, A Little Something Bakery, *alittlesomethingbakery.com*



IMMUNE BUILDER HANDCRAFTED ARTISAN TEA Blended using locally grown herbs in Higganum, crafted to give your immune system a boost, all tea blends are sugar free, caffeine free, non GMO, preservative free, $12, Whole Harmony, *wholeharmony4u.com*

MAILLE ROSEMARY HONEY MUSTARD ON TAP A true taste of the South of France, presented in a green sandstone jar made in Burgundy by the renowned Manufacture de Digoin, $33 for 4.4 oz., $48 for 8.8 oz., La Maison Maille at Westfarms Mall, West Hartford, *maille.com*

WILD MOON LIQUEURS Award-winning line of all-natural, botanically infused liqueurs, Wild Moon's six flavors: cucumber, rose, cranberry, lavender, birch and chai spice, prices vary, production tour and tasting experience available at Hartford Flavor's distillery at 30 Arbor St. in Hartford, Hartford Flavor Company, *hartfordflavor.com*

SAVORING SIMI Since 1876, 26 classic recipes from past and present SIMI Winery chefs, $39 (complete with cookbook & bottle of 2013 SIMI AV cabernet sauvignon), SIMI Winery, *simiwinery.com/holiday-gift-sets*

LITCHFIELD DISTILLERY BATCHERS' COFFEE BOURBON A unique sipping bourbon with all the luscious notes of the bourbon's caramels and vanillas combined with an earthy coffee finish that evolves with every sip, $34.95, Litchfield Distillery, *litchfielddistillery.tumblr.com*

DISCO CUP By Packed Party, $18, Pearls & Plaid, *shoppearlsandplaid.com*

GAEA FRESH EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL Gaea Fresh is a full-bodied, fruity oil with a pepper and ripe nutty flavor finish, $18.99

GAEA SUNDRIED TOMATO SPREAD Mixture of sundried tomatoes, green olives and mizithra (goat) cheese, $3.99, Gaea North America, *gaeaus.com*

BROWN SUGAR SHORTBREAD BUTTONS Four ingredients: creamery butter, wheat flour, brown sugar, salts, $5.75, 4 oz. with a reusable muslin bag.

CHOCOLATE LOVER'S BOX Fudge brownies and sea salt chocolate chunk cookies with fair-trade chocolate, locally sourced cage-free eggs and creamery butter, $29.75 (six brownies), $45 (12 brownies), one dozen sea salt chocolate chunk cookies, Gráinne Baking Co., *grainnebaking.com*

Gear & Games

CUBII UNDER-DESK ELLIPTICAL Walk while seated at your desk, Bluetooth connects to mobile app for iOS and Android to track calories, strides, time and distance progress, set goals, compete with others, and syncs with Fitbit, $347, *mycubii.com*

TRACKR BRAVO TRACKING DEVICE Attach this coin-sized Bluetooth device to nearly anything, from wallets and purses to even pets, and pair it with the free iPhone/Android app, then use your phone to locate and ring any misplaced item in seconds, $29.99, *thetrackr.com*

VIVA SOL LADDERBALL A fun tailgating game, Ladderball features two targets constructed of solid hardwood with a walnut finish, with bottle openers built in to the side of each target, $129.99, *escaladesports.com*

BALLOON DOG BANK Brightly colored, high-gloss ceramic coin bank in the shape of a balloon dog, 12"x4"x10", available in pink and silver, $55, Made by Humans, *wadsworthatheneum.org*

SONOMA VINTAGE HI-FI Circa-1960s restored mid-century Sonata Telefunken radio/record player, eight-vacuum tube amplifier, $175, available at Vintage Hi-Fi Museum's gift shop, West Hartford, *vintagehifimuseum.blogspot.com*

AFTERSHOKZ HEADPHONES Trekz Titanium bone conduction headphones transmits audio to the inner ears through the skull, leaving your ear canals open, allowing you to hear ambient sounds, wireless Bluetooth connectivity, $129.95, *aftershokz.com*

TRAXXAS SLASH RC TRUCKS Traxxas offers models for the entire family with prices starting under $200, Amato's Toy and Hobby, Middletown, *traxxas.com*

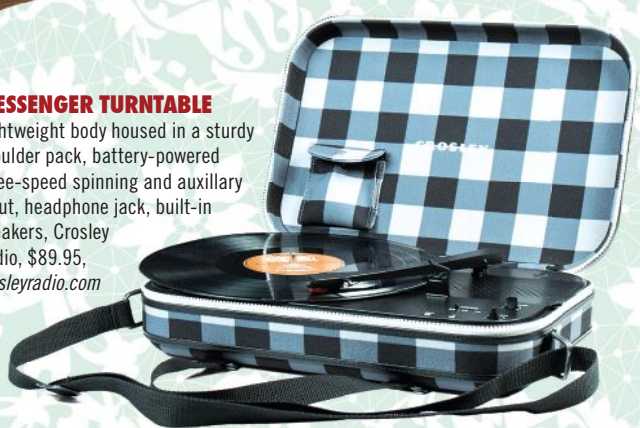
LEATHER TECH HUB Offers an outlet saddle for charging, can accommodate oversized phones and excess charging cords, features a cut-out so phones can be plugged directly into wall outlets, $35, *greatusefulstuff.com*

BEEROPOLY Players take turns rolling the dice (included) and moving their bottle cap pieces around the handmade pine-wood board, completing a series of beer challenges, $32, *uncommongoods.com*

WOBBLE CHESS SET Concave landscape stabilizes freely quivering chess pieces, creating a lively interaction between board and pieces, Umbra, $250, *fairhaven-furniture.com*

HARMAN KARDON GO+ PLAY Portable speaker with Bluetooth wireless streaming, equipped with a built-in microphone for crystal-clear calls, built-in rechargeable battery, provides up to 5 hours of playtime, USB charging port for smartphones and tablets, available in black and white, $399.95, *harmankardon.com*

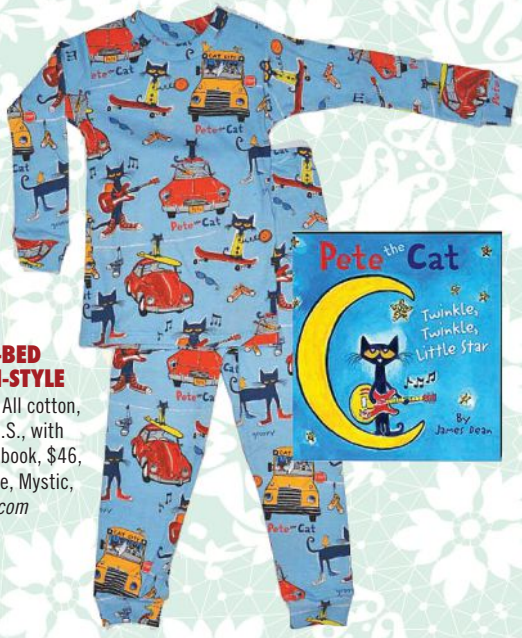
MESSENGER TURNTABLE Lightweight body housed in a sturdy shoulder pack, battery-powered three-speed spinning and auxillary input, headphone jack, built-in speakers, Crosley Radio, $89.95, *crosleyradio.com*



For Kids

CAMILL RAG DOLL Handmade girl rag doll made from cotton and wool with hand-stitched details, 14" tall, Cleo And Poppy, $52, *etsy.com/shop/cleoandpoppy*

REINDEER HEADBAND Glitter antlers with a floral corsage on the side, completed with a sparkling band, one size fits ages 1-6 years, $24.95, Catimini, *justhatched.com*



BOOKS-TO-BED LONGJOHN-STYLE PAJAMAS All cotton, made in the U.S., with the matching book, $46, The Blue Horse, Mystic, *thebluehorse.com*

"THE NEW ENGLANDER" TEETHING RING Each 3-inch maple ring has been sealed with organic beeswax and organic coconut oil, fabric is plaid and soft gray minkey, $11.50, *paintedbytheshore.etsy.com*

TOOTH FAIRY PILLOW Keep baby teeth safe until pickup time with this handmade felt pocket tooth pillow, custom made with your child's initial and shaped like a tooth so the Tooth Fairy knows it's for her, 90 colors to choose from, $15, Milo and Molly, Avon, *miloandmolly.etsy.com*

CHILD'S HOLIDAY BELT Green and red stripe belt, 1 inch thick with nickel D-ring buckle and tip on each end, perfect size for toddler/child pants, all handmade and sewn to any requested size, $15, Brimmer Boys, Avon, *brimmerboys.com*

TEACH MY BABY LEARNING KIT DELUXE All-in-one learning kit for babies 6 months and older, divided into four sections to teach babies: First Words, First Numbers, Self and Sound & Touch, from finger puppets and books to blocks and puzzles, the kit is full of learning toys, $29.99, *teachmy.com*

ARCKIT 90 Everything model makers need to build a diverse range of impressive structures up to 960 sq. ft to scale is found in this kit, 220-plus pieces, ilustrated instruction booklet, ages 12-14-plus, $99.99, *arckit.com*

THISTLE THE FAUN DOLL Heirloom cloth art doll, 19 inches tall, organic cotton flannel fabric, hand dyed, best for ages 3-plus, Handmade by Elizabeth Swing, $70, *emergolde.com*

SPECIALIZED RIP ROCK 20" BIKE Wider tire than the original children's bike from Specialized (the Hot Rock), also comes in 12", 16" and 24," in a range of colors, 12" and 16" bikes include training wheels, $250, Outdoor Sports Center, Wilton, *outdoorsports.com*

HOMESTAR ORIGINAL HOME PLANETARIUM High definition with ultra-bright, 3-watt LED and rotating movement projects the night sky on various surfaces, interchangeable discs with and without highlighted constellations, $149.99, Sega Toys, *segatoys.space*

For Her

IRIS SETLAKWE ENSEMBLE
Casually decked out by Iris Setlakwe (established 2001, Montreal), Italian knit sweater in ice, $295, cloud grey jeans, $285, Modal scarf, $185, Morneault's Stackpole Moore Tryon, *stackpolemooretryon.com*

POSIE TURNER SOCKS
Tagged "modern socks with inspiring mantras," each left foot has a unique motivating note with mantras like Good Vibes Only, Dream Big, Be Awesome and Shine Bright, $16.50, gift sets available, Posie Turner, *posieturner.com*

HEADSET SOCK
Prevents headphones from getting tangled, comes in fun colors and patterns to distinguish which headphones are yours, $9.99, Headset Sock, *headsetsock.com*

WESTERN WEAR & ACCESSORIES
Caman Boots Navajo sterling and turquoise belt buckle, Native American turquoise coral and turquoise belt buckle, sterling and 14K belt buckle, Nocona leather belts, $125-$600, all vintage items, Consign & Design Shoreline, *consignanddesignct.com*

ARCHE BOOTS Natural latex cushioning for maximum durability, flexibility and shock absorption, supple and scratch resistant nubuck leather repels the elements while creating a cozy home for the foot, $395-$670 depending on boot style, Workshop Inc., *workshoponthegreen.com*

RED OSPREY SILK SCARF
Hand painted by botanical illustrator Lisa Holley, who is part of the Community Outreach program at Wood River Valley Studio, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational arts organization, 42 inches square, silk sateen with hand-rolled hems, $300, Lisa Holley, L'Armoire, *larmoirenewcanaan.com*

SCARVES Eclectic mix of scarves crafted from soft, vibrant material, $15, The Art of Life, *etsy.com/shop/ArtofLifebyLaurenAnn*, *theartoflifebylaurenann.com*

FOX IN THE FOREST HAND-PAINTED CLUTCH BAG 100% canvas wristlet clutch painted with high-quality watercolors and acrylics, 5.5" x 8.5", $20, MWstyle, *mwstyle.etsy.com*

LEATHER WRAP BRACELET All your beading needs: supplies, classes, kits and gift certificates, prices vary, The Bead Hive, *beadhivect.com*

NORTHEAST STATE OF MIND HOODIE FOR THE WANDERER For the adventurer and the lover of the Northeast, screen printed, unisex sizing, $48, The Mason Jar Monroe, *themasonjarmonroe.com*

EVERYDAY CLUTCH Customize and design clutches and wristlets to your taste, choosing between a variety of bold patterns, colors, and styles, monogramming available, $46-$64, Emma Lyn Designs, *emmalyndesigns.com*

LARGE FOX PURSE Perfect for use as a large purse, beach bag, reusable shopping bag or even a day-trip toy bag, approx. 15.5" tall and 16" wide, not including straps, made to order, optional pouch measures approx. 8" x 5", $39.99, Disturbingly Adorable, *disturbingly adorable. etsy.com*

YARN SCARVES Handmade, various yarns and styles, $25-$40, Kathy Ungerleider, Granby Pharmacy, *granbypharmacy.com*

NESOLA SCARVES Vibrantly colored fashion statements, 100% charmeuse silk, exhibition is titled *Personal Perceptions: The Line Drawn Between Art and Fashion*, $200, Nesola Scarves, on display at The Wave Gallery, New Haven, The Blue Dodo in Hamden, and The Silk Road Gallery, New Haven, from Dec. 4-Jan. 3, 2017, *nesola-scarves.com*

HAND-KNIT MERINO WOOL SCARF Three skeins of merino wool give this chunky knit scarf gorgeous texture, $60, artfish 42, *artfish42.com*

MYSTERY BRAID LEATHER WRISTBAND/CUFF 2" wide x 9.5" long, with two size settings, available in black or brown or a combination of both colors, $35, Grassillini Creations, *theleathergenie.com*

For Him

IRISH ENSEMBLE Wool patch cap by Mucros Weavers, $49, wool Irish tweed waistcoat by Mucros Weaver, $149, cotton traditional Irish grandfather shirt made by Civilian, $39.50, Lucky Ewe, Hamden, *luckyeweirishgoods.com*

SAILING COLLECTION MESSENGER BAG Embroidered international signal flags, rope zipper pulls, top grain leather trim and custom printed nautical charts lining, wax cotton exterior, 15-inch laptop compartment for tech organization, $150. **SAILING COLLECTION WALLET** Top-grain premium leather, $70, Rule #5, *rulenumberfive.com*

CITIZEN PROXIMITY MEN'S WATCH Dual time zone, 1-second chronograph, measures up to 60 minutes, perpetual calendar, iPhone/Android, Bluetooth, call filtering, time/date sync and smartphone search, $595, Michaels Jewelers, *michaelsjewelers.com*

VISTA DRONE Assembled, 9.8-inch drone with LED lights and 3+3 stabilization system, durable plastic airframe, 3-axis gyro and three accelerometers for smooth, stable flight, $80 (with camera, $150), Amato's Toy and Hobby, Middletown, *amatostoyandhobby.com*

HISTORICAL CUFFLINKS Reissue of the rare 1918 "Inverted Jenny" stamp, in a silver setting, $85, Ferrucci Ltd., 53 Elm St., New Haven; 203-787-2928, *ferrucciltd.com*

PUB DARTS Steeltip darts, $29.95-plus, Dart World tournament dartboard, $59.95, cabinet in maple or walnut, $124.95, made in the U.S., Encore Billiards & Gameroom, Milford, *encorebilliards.com*

SPERRY DECOY BOOT Classic men's duck boot, seam-sealed, waterproof construction, siped soles offer the ultimate traction, $120, Outdoor Sports Center, Wilton, *outdoorsports.com*

For All

SMALL STATE BIG HEART™ CREW NECK SWEATSHIRT Using bold typography and cool graphics, this shirt is perfect for anyone who loves our small state, $68, *hartfordprints.com*

TOASTY SOCKS Irish Country Collection wool Fair Isle socks, $15, merino wool striped Connemara socks, $19.50, Lucky Ewe, Hamden, *luckyeweirishgoods.com*

203 EMBROIDERED HAT Baseball caps embroidered in Connecticut, three color combinations, classic/unisex fit, leather strap, The Two Oh Three, $35, *shopthe203.com*

Furry Friends

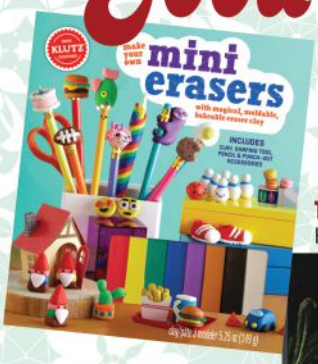
PAUL'S CUSTOM PET FOOD Real, farm-fresh food, sourced from Connecticut and New York farms and handcrafted in small batches, prices vary, Paul's Custom Pet Food, *paulscustompetfood.com*

SUBWAY ART LEASH HOOK Watercolor pencil and subway art printed on 100% recycled paper, aspen wood, 6" x 13" x 1", $38, RiverDog Prints, *riverdogprints.com*

CHARCOAL PET PORTRAIT Hand-sketched, 11"x14" portrait of your dog or cat in complementary neutral mat ready for your frame, mention DAWS Partner page and 10% will be donated to the Danbury Animal Welfare Society, graphite: starts at $100, charcoal: $250, oils: start at $400, portraits by ShawnaLee, *facebook.com/PortraitsbyShawnaLee*

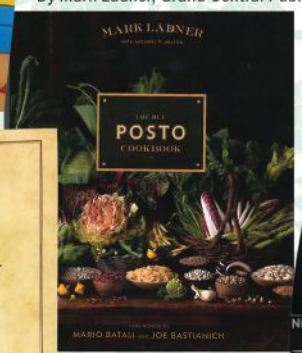
Good Reads

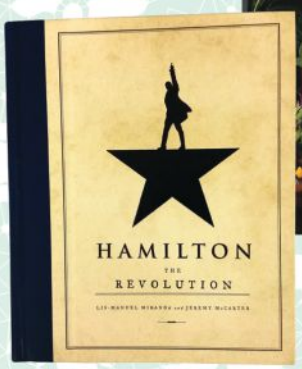
CROCHET BOOKMARK Choice of colors, $5, Glitzy, *everythingglitzy.etsy.com*



MAKE YOUR OWN MINI ERASERS Sculpt with eraser clay and then bake them in the oven, 48-page book, eight colors of eraser clay, one pencil, clay shaping tool, two sheets of papercraft displays, $21.99, KLUTZ, *klutz.com*

THE DEL POSTO COOKBOOK By Mark Ladner, Grand Central Publishing, *hachettebookgroup.com*

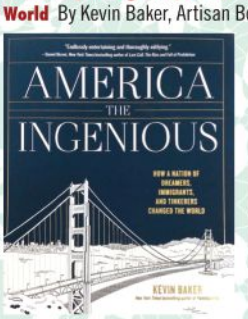




HAMILTON: THE REVOLUTION By Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter, Grand Central Publishing

AKG N60 NC Active Noise Cancellation Technology, ultra-compact design, travel carrying case, 30-hour battery life, $249, AKG by HARMAN, *harmanaudio.com*

AMERICA THE INGENIOUS: How a Nation of Dreamers, Immigrants, and Tinkerers Changed the World By Kevin Baker, Artisan Books



WHIPLASH: How to Survive Our Faster Future By Joi Ito & Jeff Howe, Grand Central Publishing

THE BIG SOCCER GAME + DANCE RECITAL Personalized children's books with customized characters' appearances. A book featuring a cast which closely resembles the child and up to five of their loved ones. Available in bilingual and single-language versions in any of five languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Italian, $34.95, Snowflake Stories, *snowflakestories.com*

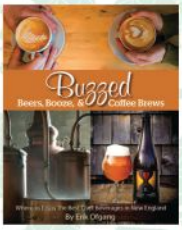
MINI CHICKADEE JOURNAL Recycled content paper stock, sturdy fold-over covers and bound with "antique gold" wiro, optional ink colors, unlined, text-weight vellum stock, 4-1/2" x 3-1/2", 70 pages, $10, FuzzyMug, *fuzzymug.etsy.com*

FABRIC BUTTON BOOKMARK A large paperclip bookmark is sturdy enough to hold your pages, receipts, coupons, etc., $5, Milo and Molly, *miloandmolly.etsy.com*

CONNECTICUT AUTHORS

THE SURVIVOR'S GUIDE TO FAMILY HAPPINESS Nina Popkin goes in search of her birth mother after her adoptive mother dies. Along the way, she realizes what family, love and loyalty really mean. $8.26 for paperback, $4.99 for Kindle, Lake Union Publishing, by Maddie Dawson, *maddiedawson.com*

BUZZED Taps into New England's burgeoning craft beer industry, longtime coffeehouse culture and the rising world of craft distilling. Take a tour of New England's craft beverage scene. $14.95, Two Roads Brewing Co., Stratford; Source Coffeehouse, Bridgeport; Byrd's Books, Bethel, by Erik Ofgang, *islandportpress.com*



NIKKI BLUE: SOURCE OF TROUBLE A young female journalist is wooed by an organization obsessed with the looming effects of global warming and the race to colonize Mars, sci-fi novel, $13.99 paperback, $2.99 Kindle, by Jack Chaucer, *goodreads.com*

NATURE'S ROYAL TEA PARTY Characters are invited to the May Queen's tea party. The little Firefly is the messenger who delivers invitations to Queen Mum, Ladybug and other royal characters, $17.95, Lucky Ewe Irish Goods, Hamden, Dudley Farmers' Market, Guilford, *cjkling.blogspot.com, cherylkling.com*

We'll start by discussing what goals matter most to you. Then we'll bring together the right specialists to tailor expert, objective solutions that optimize your total wealth management plan. Just part of how we focus on living up to you.

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8 Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings
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10 David Crosby & Friends

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12 Leo Kottke & Keller Williams
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14 The Coasters

JANUARY

19 Buster Poindexter

25 An Evening with Lyle Lovett & John Hiatt

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18 An Evening with Rita Moreno

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At New Morning Market we take great pride and care when selecting products for our customers. Paul (right) a chef and butcher, is uniquely qualified to source the finest local meats that are in line with our Mission. He checks out farms firsthand and fosters relationships with farmers like John Morosani (left), owner of Laurel Ridge Farm.

Laurel Ridge cows graze on 220 acres of pasture and are certified 100% grass fed. They never receive antibiotics or growth hormones. The beef is flavorful, tender, juicy and available fresh at New Morning Market where you will ONLY find humanely raised meat, eggs, milks and cheeses. Now that's something you can feel good about!

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129 Main St. North, Woodbury CT (203) 263-4868 www.newmorn.com

Vietnamese Soul Food

PHO, DOUGHNUTS AND MORE SHINE AT NOM-EEZ IN BLACK ROCK

BY ERIK OFGANG

Nom Nom buns
PHOTOS BY JEFF KAUFMAN

Toward the end of a satisfying meal at Nom-eez in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport, while my group sat at one of two outdoor tables on the sidewalk, a passerby approached. "How is the food here?" he asked. He caught me moments after I had started to consume a mouthful of noodles. I grunted something that translates roughly from caveman speak to "Pretty darn good!"

Intrigued, the passerby looked up at the restaurant's exterior and saw a sign advertising that it also serves as a location for Donut Crazy, a Connecticut-based doughnut chain. "If it's Vietnamese food why is there a doughnut shop?" he asked.

REVIEW

Nom-eez
Bridgeport

"No idea," I replied (by this time I had swallowed and regained rudimentary verbal skills), "but they look awesome."

And that, in a nutshell, is my opinion of Nom-eez — a restaurant opened in April by the team behind Norwalk's Match restaurant. I don't quite understand it, but I like it.

Part takeout joint, part sit-down restaurant and, yes, part doughnut shop, Nom-eez, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, and has counter service and limited seating, is many different things at once. At times it feels like a sit-down restaurant hiding within a takeout place, or maybe it's a takeout place that's been invaded by sit-down diners? Regardless, it all comes together thanks to the quality of the food.

It is the brainchild of chef Matt Storch, who is co-owner of Match, and a silent partner at The Chelsea in Fairfield. Storch, who works as head chef at both Match and Nom-eez and whose wife is Vietnamese, has long wanted to open a Vietnamese-inspired restaurant. Using recipes based off his mother-in-law's cooking, Storch teamed with his Match partners Susan McConnell and Jason Wojnarowski, who, as the owner of Donut Crazy, brought the sweet snacks to the project.

The restaurant, which opened in April, features traditional Vietnamese cuisine and street food made from fresh, clean-tasting ingredients prepared with playful, sometimes quirky creativity.

Nom-eez is a play on words taken from the last two syllables of Vietnamese (Get it? Viet-*nomeez*) and the words "nom," slang for the sound someone makes enjoying a tasty snack.

The flagship dish and one of the restaurant's standouts is the pho, a traditional Vietnamese rice noodle soup. The base of the pho at Nom-eez is a bone broth that simmers for more than 24 hours. It is spiced with cinnamon, cardamom, charred onions, charred ginger and other spices, before being finished with a fermented anchovy sauce. The resulting broth is almost clear and has none of the cinnamon-forward, almost syrupy flavor you find in some pho, giving the completed dish a very balanced taste. I ordered the regular pho, which features this bone broth filled with rice noodles, oxtail and shaved short rib. Both meats were soft and tender.

A non-traditional aspect of Nom-eez's presentation, the fresh herbs generally served beside the bowl of soup and mixed in by each diner are instead added before the plate is served.

"I made a mistake when I first went to eat pho; I never added the vegetables into it. I just ate it straight," Storch explains. "That's one of the reasons I put the vegetables inside the bowl when I present it in the restaurant, because it just makes it that much better."

Clockwise from top: Pho; coconut-tapioca; doughnuts, coffee and bubble tea; ginger salad.

Other Nom-eez standouts include the ginger salad (a kaleidoscopic assortment of veggies, napa cabbage and crunchy wontons topped with ginger-chili vinaigrette that comes together to form a salad that is my wife's favorite in the state) and the mouthwatering nom nom buns (steamed buns with your choice of braised pork — what I opted for — raw tuna or veggies topped with cucumbers and carrots, spicy mayo, hoisin and cilantro).

Less effective was the pho-ramen, a cross-cultural noodle broth that replaces the rice pho noodles with Japanese ramen noodles and adds ramen-style garnishes, such as a hard-boiled egg, to the pho broth. The result, though tasty, didn't satisfy my craving for ramen and was not as good as the traditional pho dishes offered at Nom-eez.

For dessert, diners must try the coconut-tapioca, a decadent pudding of sweet taro, rice tapioca and coconut cream. "It's breakfast, lunch and dinner," Storch says of the dish prepared by his mother-in-law from a secret family recipe, and I'd gladly have it for any meal of the day.

Pho is traditionally a breakfast dish, and Nom-eez honors the roots of its flagship cuisine by offering a reduced-price pho for breakfast, as well as a variety of early options such as the Breakfast "Mu Shu" (flour pancake, bacon, egg, cheese and hot sauce) and fried rice served with bacon and egg. The latter tasted to me like it would be the perfect late-night or early morning meal.

Nom-eez is BYOB — fortunately, there are package stores within walking distance — but even without alcohol, drink options are not lacking. The restaurant offers excellent Vietnamese coffee (Vietnamese-grown coffee steeped over condensed milk and served with ice, providing a slightly sweet coffee with rich, bold notes). I also enjoyed the coconut with a straw, which is coconut water served right out of a giant coconut. It comes with a $6 price tag but is worth it for the fun and flavor.

Storch and his team will soon be opening a takeout spot at the Westport train station that will offer doughnuts and made-on-premises sandwiches. Train commuters will also have the option of ordering from Nom-eez or one of Storch's other restaurants on the way home and having a bag of food waiting for them at the station.

Matt Storch, chef and owner of Nom-eez

Let's talk about those doughnuts. Batches of the fried confections are delivered fresh daily from the Stratford Donut Crazy (there are also locations in Shelton and New Haven). When you walk into Nom-eez, the smell of the doughnuts mixes with the smell of broth and spices, creating an unusual and pleasant aroma that is part bakery and part grandma's house before a big meal. Donut Crazy prides itself on its unusual, or "crazy," flavors. The French toast glazed was sprinkled with cinnamon and powdered sugar and drizzled with vanilla and maple icing, all coming together to suggest the flavors of the classic breakfast. The morning buzz variety had an Irish cream glaze and coffee cream cheese filling that combined all the best flavors of your morning coffee and the accompanying doughnut. The treats were, perhaps surprisingly, a great complement to the meal. Now every time I have pho, I'll crave doughnuts.

Nom-eez

2992 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport
203-923-8686, nom-eez.com
Hours: Sun., Mon.-Thu. 7 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. & Sat. 7 a.m.-10 p.m.
Price range: Entrées $11-$18 (pho: $14, pho-ramen: $15); appetizers $4-$10 (pork nom nom buns $8, see-through roll $7); dessert $5-$6 (coconut-tapioca $6). Wheelchair accessible

AMBIANCE The feel is laid back with a tongue-in-cheek streetfood attitude. Space is small but has a New York City-style efficiency — to get to the bathroom you have to walk through the kitchen. A polished wood counter wraps around the room, providing the only indoor seating area. Space is limited, so it's best as an eat-in destination for groups of three or fewer.

SERVICE The order-at-the-counter nature of the spot can take some getting used to. I recommend getting apps, main courses and desserts, but ordering them all at once at the start of the meal can be tricky, and requires more pre-planning than I'm accustomed to. However, the staff was friendly and patient, and made the counter service less awkward by bringing each dish out in the proper order and taking the time to answer questions.

FOOD Traditional Vietnamese fare is served with creative twists, resulting in simple but excellent cuisine made with high-quality ingredients.

Eleni Papahristou, owner of Cava Restaurant, hangs Swarovski crystals in the Versailles Room of the Southington restaurant. PHOTOS BY ARNOLD GOLD

Delicious Decorations

CAVA RESTAURANT IN SOUTHINGTON SERVES UP AMAZING HOLIDAY DISPLAY

BY MARYELLEN FILLO

It's that time of year again: eating out in restaurants decked out for the holidays, some garland around the doorway, maybe a tree and some poinsettias on the table.

And then there is Cava Restaurant in Southington, where each of its dining rooms and its bar are dressed in over-the-top, decked-out décor, a tradition that has made it a must-go destination for diners in the mood for a side of seasonal creativity.

Fashioned by Tony Papahristou, whose family owns the West Street eatery with Italian fare, the lavish decorations have drawn attention from New York City window designers who have offered jobs to the 20-something because his work is so impressive.

The ever-changing and ever-growing seasonal wonderland features more than 2,000 feet of garland, 50,000 lights, dozens of trees and wreaths and overhead canopies made of real tree branches drilled into the ceilings and then decorated to make the place even more magical.

Tapping an annual budget of about $10,000, Papahristou adds to his growing collection of commercial holiday wares after deciding each spring what the new themes for each room will be. In nine years he has amassed an extensive collection of professional decorations including prisms, feathers, baubles, bangles, ornaments, cherubs, rice lights, pearls, gems, ribbons and more that are used to create yards and yards of the decadent garland, wreaths and trees featured in each room.

"I just know that each year people come

Bartender Ryan Lavoie pours a drink in the Queen of Hearts Room.

back just to see our decorations, so each year I try to top myself when it comes to each room's design," says Papahristou, whose past creations have included an elegant Gatsby Room, a whimsical Princess Room, an Ice Castle and a holiday classic-inspired Nutcracker Room.

For those planning to visit again, or dine for the first time this year, Papahristou has yet more special treats for the eye.

The main dining room is being transformed into the Versailles Room, complete with elegant, full-sized crystal chandeliers, reminiscent of the famous landmark's great hall.

"I got the idea when I visited France earlier this year, so, of course, the Versailles Room had to have chandeliers," he says. "There will be fleur-de-lis and other Versailles-inspired elements and it will be very palatial," he says, as he prepares to put the finishing touches on the rooms that will be ready the day after Thanksgiving and stay decorated through early February. "I think it's my favorite room this year."

Other themes include The Secret Garden sunroom that features trees and bird cages hung from the ceiling, and the Carousel Room with a display of 10 carousel horses and a fireplace mantel decorated with the theme in mind.

The bar and tavern area has a Queen of Hearts theme, an homage to *Alice in Wonderland*. Thousands of yards of spooled metallic ribbon cover the tree branches on the ceiling, with trees and garland boasting red balls and black and white harlequin ribbon. Look closely and you might notice the red hearts projected on the walls or the subtle velvet heart tucked above the bar.

"The idea is that even if you come here more than once during the season, there will be so much to see that you can't take it all in at one visit," says Papahristou. "You will always see something new whether you look right or left or up and down."

The Secret Garden sunroom

The self-taught Papahristou, with help from restaurant employees, creates all the decorations by hand. "We're working on them about 12 hours a day now," he says. "It takes about six weeks to get it all ready," he says.

And taking it down?

"There are 35 of us here and we all pitch and get them down and stored in just one day," he says, smiling.

Papahristou is a stickler for detail when it comes to his creations, which are primarily non-secular so they are appealing to all diners, regardless of religious or cultural beliefs.

"I love the holidays and the parties and the spirit, and I just want our restaurant dining rooms to be special, eye-catching and jaw-dropping and something everyone will ooh and ahh over," says Papahristou. "I think people are truly surprised when they come here the first time because they don't believe it when they walk inside. And I just love to see the smiles."

Cava Restaurant

1615 West St., Southington
860-628-2282, cavact.com
Hours: Mon.-Thu. 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. 11:30-10 p.m., Sat. noon-10 p.m., Sun. noon-9 p.m.
Price range: Starters $11-$14, entrées $18-$33
Handicapped accessible

TNT Lover Sushi Roll

KI ASIAN BISTRO & SUSHI, DANBURY

ONE DISH

Get ready for an explosion of flavor. The TNT Lover roll is made with chopped bluefin toro (the fatty belly meat of tuna), caviar, tempura flakes, scallion and asparagus topped with raw tuna and served with truffle soy sauce. The result is a sushi roll that can redefine your perception of what a sushi roll can be. At least that's what it did for me. The raw tuna provides a burst of fresh-as-the-sea notes, cut and enhanced by the crunch of the tempura flakes and the rich truffle soy sauce, creating a taste simultaneously sushi and non-sushi.

The bistro was opened in 2012 by Chef Benny Chow, a veteran of Nobu restaurant in New York, who trained under Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto. I discovered the restaurant earlier this year and have been hooked ever since. I'm no sushi connoisseur, but the traditional sushi and sashimi is at a different level than any I have previously tried. The specialty rolls such as the TNT Lover are also thoroughly above par and a great gateway roll for diners not yet sold on the world of sushi. In addition to the TNT Lover, I recommend the American Dream: shrimp tempura, spicy tuna, avocado and tobiko wrapped

with soybean paper and served with spicy mayo. Like the TNT roll, it provides an explosive burst of flavor.

203-942-2916, kiasian.com

| ERIK OFGANG |

John Pittari, left, circa 1971, and New Morning Market today. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEW MORNING MARKET

All Natural

WOODBURY'S NEW MORNING MARKET CELEBRATES 45TH ANNIVERSARY

BY ERIK OFGANG

It was 1971, the echoes of Woodstock still reverberating in the consciousness of the nation, when the natural food revolution arrived in Woodbury.

"For people of the baby boomer generation, there was just this very strong getting-back-to-the-Earth movement, but from more of a philosophy-of-life perspective, that this was the way things are meant to be," recalls John Pittari. "There were a lot of intentional communities that were getting together wanting to make a difference, and New Morning Trading Co. really spun out of that. There was a group that found themselves in Woodbury, wanting to provide good, healthy food that was an alternative to the conventional food, which was in the early stages of the mass, mega, industrial production."

The original store was located in the Hotchkissville section of Woodbury. Though not a founder of the trading company, Pittari became a customer after it opened. Soon thereafter he quit his job at General Electric's corporate headquarters in Fairfield in order to take a part-time job at the store. "I made that decision because I wanted to leave the world a better place," he says.

Before long, Pittari worked his way up to manager and ultimately bought the business. He says there was a pioneering spirit to those early days, but also challenges. "The first years were a struggle," he says. "Woodbury was like a microcosm of what was going on in the nation overall — if you don't want to be part of the established order, you're not a patriot, or you're somebody to be feared."

Local food and health items that we take for granted today were considered outlandish to some in the '70s, he adds. "Back then yogurt was weird. It was like 'what's yogurt and is this going to undermine our society.'"

Over time, however, people's fears were assuaged and New Morning Market became a staple of the community.

Forty-five years and three locations since its founding, the store continues to carry the torch of the local, sustainable and natural movement.

Its current location, which opened in 2012, was built with the local environment in mind. "Protecting the watershed was a very important part of the development," Pittari says. As a result, the parking lot is gravel instead of paved, and was engineered to be highly permeable. There are also bioretention gardens (water gardens) that clean and filter the stormwater runoff from the parking lot. Instead of a lawn — which is far less permeable for rain water than most people realize — native plants that some might consider weeds are allowed to grow, providing habitat for wildlife indigenous to the region.

Inside the 32,000-square-foot store, guests can browse one of the state's largest selections of organic produce, local meats and dairy products from humanely raised animals. The market is also home to The Provender, an award-winning fresh food counter, run by chef Carol Byer-Alcorace; a full coffee bar that also offers fresh organic juices and smoothies, as well as kombucha tea. A "vitality center" on the second floor offers yoga classes, hosts special events and provides guests the option of scheduling appointments with a nutritionist, massage therapist and other wellness professionals.

Since the store opened, Pittari says the general public has become much more interested in local foods. But with all the information out there, there can be a lot of confusion, not to mention clever marketing ploys used to trick consumers searching for healthier, more sustainable products. "Back in the mid-'90s, the consumer was getting the message that eating whole wheat was better than eating white flour," Pittari says. As a result, conventional bread companies rebranded "white bread" as "wheat bread" and found that sales were not hurt by the movement against white flour bread. "They kicked the can down the road 10 years. They didn't have to change what they were making, they just changed how they talked about it," Pittari says.

Forty-five years after its founding, New Morning Market is still going strong and Pittari is still passionate about his work. "Our mission has essentially stayed the same since I became involved, which is to build a healthy, sustainable local food community. [It's] more than just providing healthy foods to customers. It's a community of everyone who would be involved — farmers, value-added product producers, distributors and suppliers, certainly my staff and certainly our customers, but also the whole community, everybody, whether they shop in the store or not. It's all part of the sustainable, healthy food community."

New Morning Market
129 Main St. N., Woodbury
203-263-4868, newmorn.com
Wheelchair accessible

Soup's On!

WARM UP TO THESE CHOWDERS AND BISQUES THIS WINTER

Seafood isn't just for the summer. Hot chowders and bisques are a great way to fend off those winter chills. Whether you prefer thick New England style or the more watery Rhode Island, or if your favored protein is lobster, clams or even mussels, these steamy soups are sure to satisfy. The only thing you won't find in these chowders and bisques are tomatoes — no Manhattan style here. Oh, and extra oyster crackers, please!

BY MICHAEL LEE-MURPHY, ERIK OFGANG AND ALBERT YURAVICH

Butternut squash bisque
CASK REPUBLIC, Norwalk

Sweet potato clam chowder
The Ginger Man, Greenwich

Butternut squash bisque
Cask Republic, Norwalk

The Ginger Man in Greenwich and its Cask Republic sister restaurants (locations in Stamford, New Haven and Norwalk) are known for being best-in-class beer bars, but as anyone who has ever eaten at one of the locations knows, lots of thought and skill goes into the food. The restaurants' chowder and bisque offerings are no exception. The Ginger Man's sweet potato clam chowder combines two seemingly dissonant flavors into one effective dish. The sweet potato provides the subtle backbone to this mildly thick chowder filled with an assortment of finely chopped veggies and clams.
The butternut squash bisque offered at Cask Republic Norwalk (and expected to soon be added to the menu in New Haven) is on the other side of the culinary spectrum. Full of hearty fall squash flavors, this engagingly sweet bisque is enhanced by chopped scallions and soft pecans.

The Ginger Man, 64 Greenwich Ave., 203-861-6400, gingermanct.com

Cask Republic, 99 Washington St. #2, 203-354-0163, caskrepublic.com

Original mussel chowder
Bobette's Take Out, Milford

This chowder is made with love. When co-owner Bobette Moore's mother was diagnosed with cancer more than a decade ago, Moore decided to whip up this unique creation and dedicate it to her mom. Before passing, Moore's mother tried the chowder, and loved it, and it's been on

Lobster bisque
S&P OYSTER CO., Mystic

Sweet potato clam chowder
GINGER MAN, Greenwich

the menu ever since. Succulent and sweet Prince Edward Island mussels, cream, finely diced potatoes, a dash of white wine and a secret ingredient that co-owner Gary Caulfield wouldn't divulge come together in a delicious and not-too-thick chowder. It's one of many soup creations offered daily. (Check the website, as specials often change.) Friday is lobster bisque day. As the bluesy, Caulfield-penned song that plays on Bobette's website proclaims, "She's got the soup."

93 Boston Post Road
203-874-9414, bobettes.com

Lobster bisque
S&P Oyster Co., Mystic

This thick, creamy bisque is likely to elicit a satisfying "yum" from anyone who tries it. The local lobsters are hand-picked and cooked on site, and all parts of the crustacean are used to create the rich, flavorful base. A spicy finish is a pleasant surprise. Chef Edgar Cobena's roux, the thickening combination of flour and butter, gives the bisque its satisfying consistency. Another standout is the equally thick New England clam chowder with chopped quahogs from local waters. Cobena's knowledge of South American flavors shines in the Peruvian-style vegetable soup, a vegan concoction of local veggies and spices from South American markets and accented with toasted canchitas (unpopped corn kernels).

1 Holmes St.
860-536-2674, sp-oyster.com

Quahog chowder, New England and Rhode Island style
Oyster Club, Mystic

It comes down to a matter of preference: these chowders are the same except for the addition of fresh heavy cream that goes into the New England variety. These are not the thick, heavy chowders you may be accustomed to, however. With no flour or thickeners, you can focus on the fresh clams, potatoes, bacon and herbs. Starting with whole live quahogs from the nearby Noank Oyster Co-op, the clams are scrubbed and steamed open to create the base of the broth, before the clams are picked and cut into chunks. Slab bacon is cut into meaty chunks and rendered down. Onions and celery are sauteed in the bacon fat, building into a broth with large-diced potatoes and fresh herbs. A big splash of heavy cream (for the New England style only), fresh pepper and chopped parsley complete these smoky chowder creations.

13 Water St.
860-415-9266, oysterclubct.com

New England clam chowder
Rory's Restaurant, Darien

A relaxed, family-style seafood and American restaurant, Rory's offers an excellent and justly celebrated chowder. Less thick and creamy than many chowders, it has an almost chicken-soup-like consistency. On paper, that can make it sound less appealing, but don't be fooled. This chowder is a grab bag of tasty spices, finely cut veggies and clams with just the right level of chew that combine into one elite and distinctive bowl of broth. Order in at a table or at the bar, or get this steaming bowl of goodness to go. After trying this chowder, Rory's lobster bisque, which is only available on Tuesdays and Fridays, is on our must-try list.

416 Boston Post Road
203-655-9453, rorys.net

New England clam chowder
Close Harbour Seafood, Plantsville

While the Plantsville section of Southington is not necessarily "close" to any harbors, its chowders certainly taste like it. Big, hearty chunks of clam give this chowder a raw, straight-from-the-ocean taste. It is also one of the creamier chowders on the list, creating a rich taste but not overwhelmingly so. It's great for the first snowy month of the year. The closeness of the name has to do with owners Bill and Sandy Close. Having just reopened this year after a 2015 fire, Close Harbour Seafood is a must for those who love that shoreline taste, but don't quite live there.

959 Meriden-Waterbury Turnpike
860-621-7334, closeharbourseafood.com

New England clam chowder
Take Five Cookery, Hartford

Chef Kevin Moran only makes his chowder one day a week, on Friday. His Take Five Cookery in the basement of the Gold Building in Hartford means that it might be a bit difficult to get to for those who don't work in downtown Hartford on a Friday. Take Five's New England clam chowder is worth it though, we promise. It is gorgeously blended, with no one flavor overpowering any other. In the taste tests at Chowdafest this past October, this soup took first prize in Connecticut and third in the nation.

1 Financial Plaza (The Gold Building)
860-524-9669, takefivecookery.com

New England seafood bisque
Dunville's, Westport

A laid-back bar and restaurant, Dunville's prides itself on its soups, and it is these hot bowls for which chef Bob Backus is best known. In 2015 Dunville's won the traditional chowder category at Chowdafest in Westport and came in second at the competition in October of this year. Since the chowder festival began six years ago, Dunville's has always placed first, second or third. After tasting the restaurant's signature New England bisque, it's easy to understand the basis of all the awards. Slightly thick with big chunks of potato and tasty clams, a bowl of the bisque quickly warmed us up on a recent afternoon.

41 Saugatuck Ave.
203-227-0511
facebook.com/dunvilles.bar

New England clam chowder
TAKE FIVE COOKERY, Hartford

New England clam chowder
City Fish Market, Wethersfield

The Silas Deane Highway might seem like an unlikely place for some of the freshest seafood around, but indeed, at City Fish you can still see the fish swimming in large tanks. City Fish sells fish wholesale all over the state, but has a small counter for fish and chips, fried clams, and, of course, clam chowder. This one is for those who like their chowder a little thicker. The place has the look and feel of a Seattle-style fish market, and you won't be disappointed to sample the various offerings.

884 Silas Deane Hwy.
860-522-3129, cfishct.com

New England clam chowder
The Griswold Inn, Essex

Essex's beloved "Gris" not only has an excellent clam chowder, but the setting is as faithful an ode to an 18th-century colonial New England tavern as you are likely to find. The place hasn't changed all that much in the last few centuries. For the true chowder gourmands (or any type of gourmand, really), be sure to check out the famous Griswold Inn buffet. It's authentic chowder in an authentic setting, mere yards from the Colonial-era harbor on the Connecticut River. Too much chowder (or house-made Revolutionary Ale)? Grab a bed upstairs at the inn.

36 N. Main St.
860-767-1776, griswoldinn.com

Asylum Gin
ASYLUM DISTILLERY, BRIDGEPORT

At Asylum Distillery, which opened in May, all spirits are made using corn from Pleasant View Farms in Somers. Asylum's owner and distiller, Robert Schulten, says this gives his products a local agriculture base, and the corn provides a smoothness and flavor that Schulten believes can't be beat.

The Asylum vodka is delicate and smooth, and the Asylum corn whiskey — a moonshine or white (unaged) whiskey — has a less ferocious bite and far more delicacy than other moonshines I've tasted. But, arguably, the standout product is the Asylum gin. Gin derives its flavor from juniper berries and was originally used in England for medicinal purposes. Asylum gin starts out as Asylum vodka before being infused

with juniper and other herbs. Gin is all about the floral, earthy notes of juniper. But some gins over-extract the juniper, creating a flower pot's worth of herbal flavors. Other gins have the opposite problem; they lack strong herbal elements and taste like bland vodka with a dab of juniper. The trick is finding the right balance. Asylum has accomplished that with its gin, which in addition to juniper berries, is infused with angelica root and coriander seed.

ONE DRINK

Asylum products are distributed in Fairfield County. I enjoyed a small sample at the distillery in Bridgeport where tours are offered by appointment, but also took a bottle home. I look forward to using it for a gin and tonic, and a negroni (an Italian cocktail made with gin, bitters and Campari liqueur).

203-767-3949, asylumdistillery.com

| ERIK OFGANG |

Tonight, We Feast

HOW I CAME TO EMBRACE THE CHRISTMAS EVE TRADITION OF THE FEAST OF THE SEVEN FISHES

BY SHELLEY LAWRENCE KIRKWOOD

It's Christmas Eve 2014 and I've run out to take care of a quick errand. My wipers, set to high, are frantically whisking away gallons of rain. My path is dotted with the glow from intermittent street lights overhead. "So much for a white Christmas," I say to Bing Crosby, who is singing about it on the car radio and, you know, really wants it to happen.

Al Lochiatto prepares the lobster.

Opposite page: Louisiana-style barbecued Gulf shrimp is dished out, above; the lobster portion of the meal, below.

PHOTOS BY SHELLEY LAWRENCE KIRKWOOD

I've run out in this storm to pick up a last-minute Christmas gift: candle-holders I made in a community center pottery class. They have been fired and cooled at the last moment possible, but they are ready by 9 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and that works for me. By the time I make it back through the porch door of my mother and stepfather's cream-colored Victorian house 10 minutes later, my husband, parents, sister, brother, his wife, their two children and our own two are getting ready to sit down for the third of seven courses of our Christmas Eve dinner, aka The Feast of the Seven Fishes.

On the cobalt-tiled kitchen island is a tidy line of Christmas teddy bear-themed plates, an heirloom of sorts from my late step-grandmother Nina Antonetta Lochiatto, whose fanciful decorative flair punctuates most of our holiday meals. Course three is where we are picking up after my brief disappearance: buttery Gulf shrimp with couscous, finished with pomegranate molasses and a dusting of sour sumac powder. With just a few quick flips of a spatula, the steaming shrimp is tossed onto the plates. A fresh round of champagne, festive as confetti fluttering in the air, has been poured into the slender tulip flutes that my mother only unveils once or twice each year. Ella Fitzgerald is singing about it being cold outside. Together we all sit down in the glow and familiarity of the table to another course of my favorite meal of the year.

Italians refer to Christmas Eve as "La Vigilia," or "The Vigil." Italian-Americans have embraced the mostly southern Italian tradition of hosting a large, seafood-based meal in celebration of the vigil. The custom of abstaining from meat on this occasion is intended to honor Catholics' abstaining from indulgence before a religious holiday. In reality, there is nothing ascetic about the meal. "We can't eat meat?" say the Italians. "OK, then let's eat lots and lots of delicious seafood — and pasta, and vegetables." Apparently, dessert can also comfortably be worked into a night of vigil (and maybe just a nip of limoncello).

While there is clearly some framework that has been established for The Feast, it's nonetheless a meal open to interpretation. Some families serve as few as three courses, possibly a nod to the three wise men, or the Trinity. Others, in a labor-intensive affirmation of Jesus and his apostles, serve as many as 13. The most common interpretation, as the American

nomenclature suggests, is a seven-course extravaganza. Whether this number simply honors the seven sacraments or is a play on the seven deadly sins, or because seven is considered a heavenly number, is anybody's guess. Some families even deviate from these numbers, but let's not get too crazy. The important thing to understand here is: it's not important. Nobody knows and nobody really cares how many courses you eat, or your reasoning behind your choices. Go ahead and make some seafood, maybe some pasta, a few vegetables, and enjoy. Just don't eat meat.

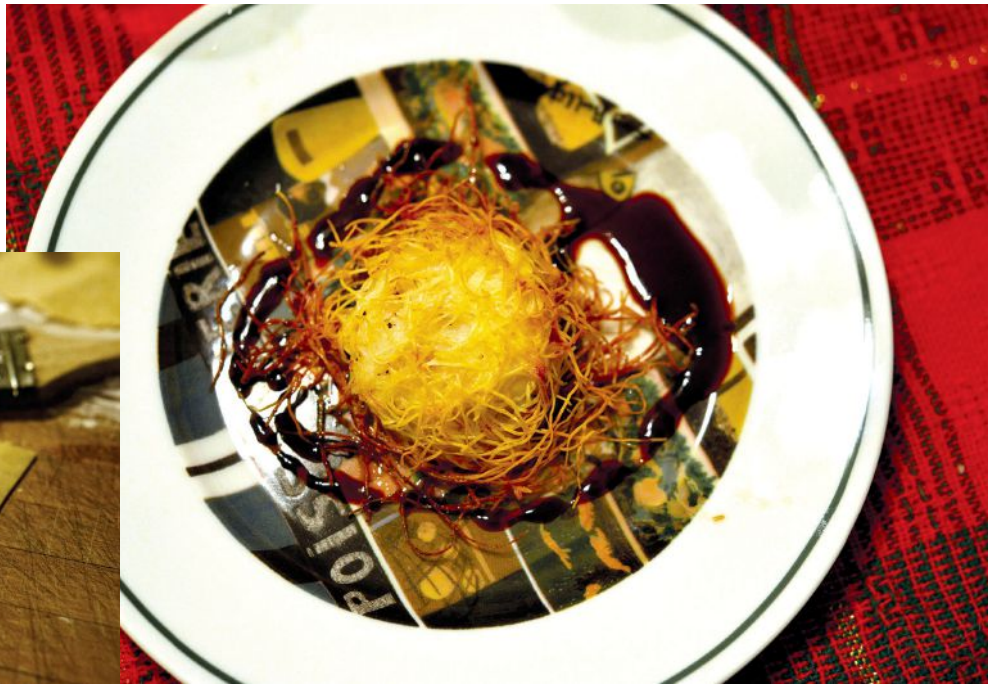
In my own family, we eat seven courses, not in deference to any particular religious belief, but because that's what my stepfather Al decided long ago. I've known Al for about 39 years now; he is Nonno (grandfather) to my kids and has been a second father to me since I was 7. Al is the primary executor of The Feast and of the vast majority of meals I ate for many years. He is what is today called a "serious home cook." When he first came to live with us, I was an adolescent, and his cooking was unfamiliar and even a little threatening to my Chef Boyardee-tempered palate. I was aghast, outraged even, when meatballs the size of Wiffle balls appeared as the opening dish for Thanksgiving, along with homemade cavatelli. Over time, I embraced the omnipotence of food and cooking in our life: the curing of meats, the fermentation of vegetables and vinegars, the pasta-making, all of it.

Al's own initial culinary learning happened in his home kitchen also. His mother, who must have needed a step stool to reach most of the cupboards in her house, was a first-generation Sicilian. She was the kind of cook who would make an extra lasagna for you to take on your cross-country road trip (true story). In my memory, tomato gravy and strong coffee perpetually wafted through her kitchen.

Similarly, it is rare to walk into my mom and Al's house and not see something bubbling on the stove, or being ladled into jars. Recently I was sent home with some new experimental hot sauce in a caviar jar; the week before, pickled hot peppers in a jelly jar. In the kitchen, we often taste new finds from their collaborative adventures: oil-cured olives from a Portuguese market two hours away, saltless bagels from Quebec, Hen of the Woods mushrooms from "that tree on the side of the road." On my wedding day, Al's gift was a batch of limoncello made from lemons he picked in my yard in Tucson, which can be remade with the mother batch, basically until the end of time. On that same visit, he also found a carniceria (butcher shop) where you could actually have your meat butchered on one side of a parking lot, and cooked on the other. He came home with a meat-filled plastic bag, and fresh tortillas, ready to make a two-ingredient lunch of carne asada tacos for us all.

More often than not, meals were and are simple, and based in whole foods. No matter how impressive the outcome of a given effort, Al will never admit to it being difficult. To compliments, his answer is always the same: "It was easy." He will also

This page, from top: Champagne keeps the evening festive; Stonington sea scallops from Bombasters are flash frozen on the boat; a scallop baked in crunchy kataifi with pomegranate molasses; ricotta and egg yolk ravioli. **Opposite page:** Camp-style grilled sardines with olive oil, lemon and capers on arugula.



claim that there is no recipe for anything.

Until recent years, the extravagance of our Christmas Eve was actually kept relatively consistent. Though the meal changed in small increments, seafood always formed its nucleus, while pasta and vegetable dishes like pasta aglio e olio (linguini with pepper, olive oil, red pepper and cheese) and cauliflower fritters, served as the interludes. The food we ate was mainly white, in keeping with hopes for a white Christmas. Dessert was usually a plate of anise cookies, perhaps because we were always too tired and too full of food and wine by the end to eat much more.

In planning his menu, Al eschewed more quintessentially Christmas Eve Feast dishes like eel served "fritto" and baccala (salt cod), soaked for days and typically simmered with tomato sauce and vegetables.

Instead, our Christmas Eve meal typically favored Gulf shrimp, Stonington flounder scallops and Maine lobster.

In recent years, Al has, for reasons we need not understand or question, decided to dazzle us with his Christmas Eve menu, going so far as to type up a menu on entirely respectable card stock. I love fresh flounder with lemon and butter, and ate it happily for many years, but when I laid eyes on the 2014 menu, I was delighted to find dishes like "flash-grilled Point Judith calamari with capers and Thai chili oil" and "olive oil-poached native pollock with toasted panko and curried cauliflower." As always, the meal continued into the midnight hour, with the whole lobster served just as *some* of us were teetering on the edge of well-fed unconsciousness.

In 2015 the lobster arrived sous vide in butter, especially spectacular if you hate cracking lobster shells. That menu also included camp-style grilled sardines with olive oil, lemon and capers on arugula, and uova da raviolo (ricotta-ringed runny egg yolk ravioli) with browned butter, sage and parmesan. Watching its steady-handed construction was almost as fun as eating it.

On Christmas Eve this year, my mother will frantically clean amid her last-minute shopping and wrapping. She will set the table with the red and green tablecloth and the teddy bear dishes and pour the champagne. Al will make his multiple grocery runs, plan and print his menus. Our kids will be one year older, and utterly different than they look in pictures from the year before. My son is speaking in full sentences now. My daughter has grown two inches, and can swim underwater and ride a bike. The cooking will commence, and we will wend our way through the evening, invading the cozy kitchen, where a block of hanging copper pots the size of a V8 engine hangs perilously overhead, and where one full wall has been painted by my mom to resemble a Parisian cafe interior. We will chat and peek at what's being sautéed, braised and dressed. We'll eat, clear the plates, drink lots of wine, and sit together again, marking another year. Amid the beeswax candles, the clanging pots and pans, the Rudolph cartoons, there is a kind of reverence underfoot. I often retreat to an adjacent hallway, just to listen to everyone talking, the kids playing.

I hope that my children will forever feel the warmth and bits of magic generated in this kitchen, and perhaps even some day, remembering these evenings, be inspired to cook their own feasts.

Craft Cruising

BY ERIK OFGANG

Bobby Wheeler at Stony Creek Brewery, Nov. 27 Enjoy Stony Creek brews while listening to music performed by this singer and musician in the brewery's impressive taproom. 2-5 p.m. Free admission. 5 Indian Neck Ave., Branford. *203-433-4545, stonycreekbeer.com*

Festivus at OEC Brewing, Dec. 4 OEC Brewing will kick off the holiday season with its annual *Seinfeld*-inspired beer festival. The brewery will offer special-release beers, as well as a curated list of sour beer from around the globe. The Green Grunion food truck will also be on hand offering San Diego-style burritos. Noon-7 p.m. Free admission. 7 Fox Hollow Road, Unit B, Oxford. *203-295-2831, wp.oecbrewing.com*

Beer Conn, Dec. 10 One of the state's premier indoor beer festivals returns to the Webster Bank Arena in December. More than 50 breweries from Connecticut and beyond will offer some of the top brews they produce. Session 1: 12:30-4 p.m. Session 2: 5:30-9 p.m. Webster Bank Arena, 600 Main St., Bridgeport. *beer-conn.com*

Chocolate and Wine Pairing at Sunset Meadows Vineyard, all month Visitors to this vineyard can enjoy a tasting of five award-winning estate wines paired with five specialty chocolates. Reservations required for groups of six or more. Mon.-Thu., 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri. & Sat. 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 599 Old Middle St., Goshen. *860-201-4654, sunsetmeadowvineyards.com*

Two Roads Fourth Anniversary, Dec. 18 Two Roads Brewing will celebrate its fourth anniversary at this daylong event at the Stratford brewery. Details were scant as of press time, but you can bet the brewery will be pulling out the stops and offering some great limited-release beers. Noon-7 p.m. 1700 Stratford Ave., Stratford. *203-335-2010, tworoadsbrewing.com*

Winter Wine Trail Kicks Off The Connecticut Coast & Country Winter Wine Trail competition will start Jan. 2 and run through April 2. During that time, trekkers who get their winter wine trail passports stamped at the three wineries on the trail will be eligible to win a variety of prizes. Participating wineries are Bishop's Orchards Winery in Guilford, and Gouveia Vineyards and Paradise Hills Winery, both in Wallingford. *CTCoastCountryWineTrail.com*

Erik Ofgang is the author of Buzzed: Beers, Booze, & Coffee Brews — Where to Enjoy the Best Craft Beverages in New England. *Have a craft beverage event coming up next month? Email him at eofgang@connecticutmag.com.*

Raising the Bar

NEW BAR, FRESH MENU AT LITCHFIELD'S STYLISH WEST STREET GRILL

BY MARYELLEN FILLO

When it comes to celebrity people-watching in Connecticut, there are few places better than the landmark West Street Grill on the Green in Litchfield.

Now, the streetside eatery known for its quintessential charm, continental menu and who's who pedigree of A-list diners has made the experience even nicer thanks to a new bar area that provides a relaxed, up-close-and-personal view of the comings and goings inside and outside the restaurant. And who knows who might be perched on the stool next to yours!

"We thought it would be a more casual look and give our guests somewhere to sit that doesn't feel so formal but still offers some casual elegance," says co-owner James O'Shea, who, with partner Charlie Kafferman, has made it the place to dine whether you are a celebrity with a Litchfield County summer home, or someone looking for a destination dining spot during a backroads weekend drive.

O'Shea and Kafferman are fixtures at the front of the house, making sure guests are happy and well attended to during their visit. "And now we have this extra space, and booths, that is inviting, casual and can be seen if you take a sneak peek from the sidewalk," says O'Shea.

Of course the new bar area meets the "high bar" (no pun intended) status that has consistently catapulted West Street Grill to the top of "best restaurant" lists. Fashioned of rich cherry wood by a master woodworker, the clubby yet bistro-like bar area includes a finely crafted back bar, comfortable bar stools and subtle floral arrangements and amenities that make it nearly impossible to resist a classic cocktail and some conversation before heading to the dining room.

"Actually we are getting a lot of people who would just like to eat at the bar," says O'Shea, noting that the casual vibe mimics the al fresco dining area that West Street Grill established long before sidewalk dining became the rage.

Diners at West Street Grill usually have a story to tell about a celebrity they have seen there. Regulars include George Clooney, Mia Farrow, Philip Roth, Henry Kissinger, Richard Gere, Kevin Bacon and Daniel Day-Lewis.

"To us, they are just here to enjoy a good meal," says O'Shea, "and other customers are usually very respectful."

But there are more changes at this Litchfield dining landmark.

There's a new chef, Carlos Perez, who was named executive chef earlier this year and is already making his mark, not just on the lunch and dinner menus, but on the dessert choices, as well.

Perez, who formerly worked for the Mill Restaurant Group, also owns La Palette Bakery in Watertown. Besides a flair for everything sweet, Perez has also introduced menu items that highlight molecular gastronomy, the popular food science that transforms the tastes and textures of food, such as tuna prosciutto with micro wasabi and grilled Allen Brothers ribeye with chipotle patatas bravas and rum gastrique. Bar items include vegan dumplings, bistro sliders, burrata (Italian cheese made from mozzarella and cream) salad and ahi tuna flatbread.

Above: Bartender Sabrina Roper at the new bar. **Left:** Braised short ribs of beef, sweet potato puree, crispy sesame Brussels sprouts and sweet soy and ginger reduction.
PHOTOS BY JOHN MCKENNA

And if that isn't enough change, there's more. Its private dining "Monkey Club" room, named after the tasteful but oh-so-whimsical Susan Waken wall murals there, is now open to diners.

"It's become one of the most popular rooms for dining," says Kafferman, noting that the restaurant still books private parties in the backroom space that boasts a French feel and a cozy intimacy.

"I think, even with our changes, we still have such an appeal," says O'Shea, admitting that, as a small business owner, it is imperative that towns and the state provide whatever help they can so small businesses can prosper. "We just want to have a place that has appeal and is inviting and is a place people can come and sit and enjoy. I think we do that."

Chocolate tart

West Street Grill

43 West St., Litchfield
860-567-3885, weststreetgrill.com
Hours: Mon. 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., closed Tue., Wed. & Thu. 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 9 p.m., Fri. 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 10 p.m., Sat. 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 10 p.m., Sun. 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 9 p.m.
Price range: Lunch starters $9-$15, lunch entrées $17-$23, dinner starters $10-$17, dinner entrées $24-$45
Handicapped accessible

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Still time to reserve for Holiday Parties!

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Most Romantic
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best restaurants
CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE 2016

Best Italian

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RESTAURANT

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203.785.8722

Reservations
Recommended
goodfellasrestaurant.com

dining guide

DECEMBER 2016

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New London.....122
Tolland.....122
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LYULKA/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

Fairfield County

Aranci 67 • ***Italian*** • **EP** Excellent Sorrento-style Italian food made by the former chef at Le Fontane. Menu includes best-in-class pasta dishes. • 142 Old Ridgefield Road, Wilton, 203-587-1300 *aranci67.com*. Closed Sun. D, L (Mon.-Fri.), $$, WA

Archie Moore's Bar & Restaurant • ***American*** Casual pub-style dining with burgers, nachos and salads. And don't miss the award-winning buffalo chicken wings. • 48 Sanford St., Fairfield, 203-256-9295 *archiemoores.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $

DaPietro's Restaurant • ***Italian*** • **EP** Chef Pietro Scotti prepares critically acclaimed cuisine. In particular, he's known for his homemade pasta, seafood, meats and game, as well as his signature sauces. • 36 Riverside Ave., Westport, 203-454-1213 *dapietros.com*. Closed Sun. L (Mon.- Fri.) D, $$

Elm • ***American*** World-class chef Brian Lewis makes culinary magic here — with the freshest local, top-quality ingredients — in an elegant minimalist environment. And there's a great Sunday brunch. • 73 Elm St., New Canaan, 203-920-4994 *elmrestaurant.com*. Closed Mon. D SB, $$$, WA

F.I.S.H. • ***Seafood*** • **EP** This mod-elegant restaurant features a variety of excellently prepared seafood favorites and a special section of the menu that lets you choose your fish and how it's cooked. • 245 Bedford St., Stamford, 203-724-9300 *fishstamford.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Thurs.) D, $$$, WA

The Fez • ***Moroccan*** In addition to excellent Moroccan fare—with small plates (kabobs, falafel salad) and large (slow-braised lamb shank, swordfish tagine)—The Fez serves up equally as eclectic live music nightly. • 227 Summer St., Stamford, 203-324-3391 *thefez1.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D LS, $$, E

Fin • ***Japanese*** Specializes in fresh, imaginative sushi and authentic Japanese cuisine. • 1253 Post Road, Fairfield, 203-255-6788; 219 Main St., Stamford, 203-359-6688 *fin-sushi.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous white clam pizza is the standout, just about any pie here is worth the wait. • 238 Commerce Drive, Fairfield, 203-333-7373; 59 Federal Road, Danbury, 203-790-7373 *pepespizzeria.com*. Open daily. L D, $, WA

Gabriele's Italian Steakhouse • ***Italian*** Gabriele's is large and luxe, and so are the steaks, which include filet mignon served on the bone, Wagyu and bone-in porterhouse. • 35 Church St., Greenwich, 203-622-4223 *gabrielesofgreenwich.com*. Open daily. D, $$$

Homestead Inn — Thomas Henkelmann • ***French*** • **EP** Upscale French restaurant features impeccable service, comfortable surroundings, an extensive wine list and creative French food. • 420 Field Point Road, Greenwich, 203-869-7500 *homesteadinn.com/thomas-henkelmann*. Closed Sun.-Mon. L (Tues.-Fri.), D, $$$

Hoodoo Brown BBQ • ***American*** • **EP** This laid-back barbecue bar and restaurant features a delicious blend of Texas, Kansas City, Carolina and other styles that will leave you craving more. • 967 Ethan Allen Hwy., Ridgefield, 203-438-6033 *hoodoobrownbbq.com*. Closed Mon. D, $$, WA

Ichiro • ***Sushi*** • **EP** Ichiro offers a combination of Asian fusion, sushi and hibachi entrees. Enjoy the full-service bar and the shows put on by the hibachi chef. • 69 Newtown Road, Danbury, 203-792-8881 *ichirodanbury.com*. Open daily. D, LS (Fri.-Sat.), $$

Joseph's Steakhouse • ***American*** • **EP** Known for a New York-style steakhouse experience with gems such as prime dry-aged beef. • 360 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, 203-337-9944 *josephssteakhouse.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$$, WA

l'escale • ***French*** • **EP** A stylish, romantic dining room overlooking Greenwich Harbor that serves superb Provençal cuisine. • 500 Steamboat Road, Delamar Greenwich Harbor, Greenwich, 203-661-4600 *lescalerestaurant.com*. Open daily. B L D LS SB, $$, WA

Little Pub • ***American*** • **EP RC** Great food, generous drinks, seasonal menus and a lively pub atmosphere where you'll feel right at home. • 59 Ethan Allen Hwy., Ridgefield, 203-544-9222 *littlepub.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

Local Kitchen and Bar • ***American*** • **EP** Craft beer is the name of the game here with more than 30 lines including rare local, national and international gems. There is also a full menu of classic American cuisine. • 68 Washington St., Norwalk, 203-957-3352; 85 Mill Plain Road, Fairfield, 203-955-1919 *sonolocal.com, fairfieldlocal.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Market Place • ***American*** Featuring American farm-to-table cuisine with a locally sourced menu. • 33 Mill Plain Road, Danbury, 203-616-5836 *marketplacedanbury.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Match • ***American*** • **EP** The farm-fresh, seasonal menu at this upscale SONO restaurant changes daily but always offers something intriguing. • 98 Washington St., South Norwalk, 203-852-1088 *matchsono.com*. Open daily. D L (Wed.-Fri.), $$$

Paloma • ***Latin*** • **EP** High-energy Latin-inspired restaurant and gathering place located in Stamford's Harbor Point neighborhood overlooking the marina. • 15 Harbor Point Road, Stamford, 203-998-7500 *palomagrill.com*. Closed Mon. L D SB, $$, WA

Pho Vietnam • ***Vietnamese*** A family-owned restaurant serving authentic Vietnamese food with fresh produce, choice meats and seafood. • 56 Padanaram Road, Danbury, 203-743-6049 *rivebistro.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Positano Ristorante • ***Italian*** This restaurant has been owned and operated by the Scarpati family for more than 15 years. Owner and chef Giuseppe Scarpati was born on the island of Ponza, Italy, and his cuisine focuses on all-natural cooking, with fresh fishes, meats, fruits, vegetables, and aromatic herbs. • 27 Powers Court, Westport, 203-454-4922 *positanosrestaurantwestport.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, E

Redding Roadhouse • ***American*** This cozy, classic-style pub features seafood and meat classics as well as an assortment of artisan cheeses, a good beer list and specialty cocktails. • 406 Redding Road, Redding, 203-938-3388 *thereddingroadhouse.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, E, WA

openings

A monthly look at some of what's new and exciting on the Connecticut dining scene

The Cue, Danbury Advertised as an "upscale barbecue restaurant" since opening in late September, The Cue has lived up to that billing. Better-than-average barbecue favorites like brisket, short ribs and chicken wings are offered alongside exquisite sides (beans, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw and more) within an inviting bar and restaurant. *203-207-4669, thecuedanbury.com*

House of Naan, New Haven The House of Naan Indian Kitchen & Bar features a fusion of savory Indian dishes and small plates served alongside crafted cocktails in the heart of downtown New Haven on Howe Street. *houseofnaan.com*

Mecha Noodle Bar, New Haven The state's third Mecha Noodle Bar opened in New Haven this fall. Like its predecessors in Fairfield and South Norwalk, it serves a mix of pho noodles, ramen and other Asian-fusion delicacies. *203-691-9671, mechanoodlebar.com*

Ideal Tavern, Southington Opened in July, this gastropub seeks to blend "classic dishes with forward-thinking gastronomical trends" in terms of both the food it offers and its beverage program. Chef Joseph Lucci is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America. *860-863-5444, idealtavern.com*

The Stand, Branford One of those places you hear about and then can't wait to visit, The Stand is a bar, barbecue joint and farm market all rolled into one and housed at a converted gas station. The place seeks to celebrate "the great American roadside stand" and looks full of the best kind of quirk. *203-433-4728, thestandbranford.com*

Know of a new Connecticut restaurant? Email Erik Ofgang at eofgang@connecticutmag.com

CONNECTICUT Magazine's restaurant listings are presented as a service to our readers. Information on specialties, prices, etc., was supplied by the restaurateurs. Space limitations in this guide prevent us from describing every restaurant in the state; omission is not intended to reflect upon the quality of an establishment. The listings include restaurants we know and love, and those recommended to us by our readers. Average entrée prices are based on dinner entrées: $ — inexpensive (under $15); $$ — moderate ($15-$25); $$$ — expensive (over $25). This guide is updated regularly, but it is suggested that prices and hours be verified by phone. B (Breakfast); L (Lunch); D (Dinner); LS (Late Supper); SB (Sunday Brunch); E (Live Entertainment); WA (Wheelchair Access); **EP** = 2016 Experts' Pick; **RC** = 2016 Readers' Choice.

Roberto's • ***Italian*** • **RC** Excellent Italian food with attentive service, plus catering and a full-service banquet facility. • 505 Main St., Monroe, 203-268-5723 *robertosmonroe.com*. Open daily. L (Sun.), D, $$

Sal e Pepe Contemporary Italian Bistro • ***Northern Italian*** • **RC** Offers superb cuisine with a contemporary flair, from fresh pastas and sauces to unique specials and classics with a modern twist. • 97 South Main St., Newtown, 203-426-0805 *salepeperestaurant.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

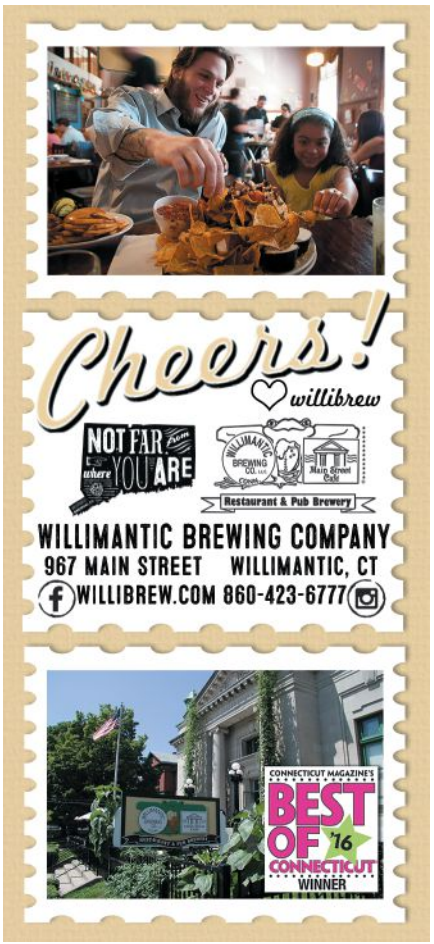
The Schoolhouse at Cannondale • ***American*** • **EP** With the motto "Fine. Fresh. Simple," the owners seek out the best sources of ingredients and treat them simply and with respect. • 34 Cannon Road, Wilton, 203-834-9816 *schoolhouseatcannondale.com*. Closed Mon. L (Fri., Sat) D (Wed., Fri., Sat.) SB, $$$

The Sitting Duck Tavern • ***American*** • **RC** Neighborhood tavern committed to using regionally and locally grown produce and products. • 3694 Main St., Stratford, 203-873-0871 *sittingducktavern.com*. Open daily. L D LS SB, $$

The Spinning Wheel • ***American*** • **RC** Enjoy a quintessentially New England-inspired menu with seasonal specials, local and homegrown accents, and modern adaptations of traditional comfort dishes. This classic style pub has 12 types of beer on tap, a rum-inspired drink menu and is housed within a newly renovated historic saltbox style house that dates back to 1742. • 109 Black Rock Tpke., Redding, 203-664-4000 *swredding.com*. Open daily. L (Thurs.-Sat.) D, $$$, WA

Tazza Osteria & Bar • ***Italian*** • **EP RC** Try favorites like grilled octopus, hanger steak, meatballs and brick oven pizza in a modern and trendy atmosphere. • 116 Post Road, Fairfield, 203-292-8810 *tazzaosteriabar.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$

Tequila Mockingbird • ***Mexican*** • **EP** The food here is made with traditional ingredients when possible, including imported chiles. Tequila is taken seriously as well, with bartenders receiving tequila training in Mexico. • 6 Forest St., New Canaan, 203-966-2222 *tequilamockingbirdnc.com*. Open daily. D, $$



Thali • ***Indian*** • **EP RC** The ambiance in each of Chef Prasad Chirnomula's restaurants is unique, but what ultimately distinguishes them is the flavorful food. • 296 Ethan Allen Hwy., Ridgefield, 203-894-1080 *thali-ridgefield.com*. Open daily. L, D, LS (Fri.-Sat.), SB, $$

Uberti's Fish Market • ***Seafood*** Specialties include fish-and-chips, stuffed scallops, lobster rolls and deep-fried lobster at this seafood market. • 88 Ferry Blvd., Stratford, 203-377-1429. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Vespa • ***Italian*** • **EP** Upscale Italian dining with a frequently changing menu that utilizes local ingredients. • 2 Post Road, Westport, 203-557-9057 *vespawestport.com*. Closed Mon. D (Mon.-Sun.), $$, WA

Wafu Asian Bistro • ***Asian*** • **EP** Upscale dining with a frequently changing menu that utilizes local ingredients. • 3671 Post Road, Southport, 203-254-2288 *wafuasianbistro.com*. Open daily. L D, $

Walrus + Carpenter • ***Barbecue*** • **EP** Sink your teeth into the barbecue offered at this sleek eatery in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport. The customer favorite is the Notorious P.I.G. • 2895 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, 203-333-2733 *walruscarpenterct.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Washington Prime • ***American*** • **EP RC** The land and sea menu has elements of Americana with cross-cultural influences. The restaurant also boasts an impressive beverage program. • 141 Washington St., South Norwalk, 203-857-1314 *washingtonprimect.com*. Open daily. L (Wed.-Sun.) D, $$, WA

| Hartford County |

Abigail's Grille and Wine Bar • ***American*** Completely remodeled 1780 tavern blending classic charm with upscale casual dining. Try Gorgonzola-topped pork chops or cedar-plank Atlantic salmon. • 4 Hartford Road, Simsbury, 860-264-1580 *abigailsgrill.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D SB, $$, WA

Artisanal Burger Company • ***American*** Gourmet burgers are the specialty here, but they are only the beginning of the culinary delights diners will experience. • 1436 Pleasant Valley Road, Manchester, 860-644-0046 *artisanalburgercompany.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

@the Barn • ***American*** This 170-seat, 4,000-square-foot ultra-sleek steakhouse and wine bar features multiple dining areas, steaks, seafood, small plates and a wine list selected by a certified sommelier, as well as a wide array of martinis, specialty cocktails and craft beers. • 17R E. Granby Road, Granby, 860-413-3888 *atthebarngranby.com*. Closed Mon. L D (Tues.-Sun.) , $$, WA

Àvert Brasserie • ***French*** • **EP** Owned by two chefs who in recent years have been making the Connecticut foodie world sit up and take notice, this restaurant offers beautiful food combined with imagination, perfectionism and zest. • 35 LaSalle Road, West Hartford, 860-904-6240 *avertbrasserie.com*. Open daily. L D, LS, $$, WA

Barcelona Restaurant & Wine Bar • ***Spanish Mediterranean*** • **EP** Barcelona's newest location in a popular line of hip, European-style restaurants. • 971 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, 860-218-2100 *barcelonawinebar.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D LS, $$, E, WA

Bear's Smokehouse Barbecue • ***Barbecue*** • **EP** Let your inner bear roar at these finger-lickin' good Kansas City-style barbecue joints owned by competitive eating champion Jamie McDonald. • 89 Arch St., Hartford, 860-724-3100; 2152 Poquonock Ave.,Windsor, 860-999-3834 *bearsbbq.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Carbone's Kitchen • ***Italian*** Established in 2012, this casual-dining little brother to Carbone's Ristorante uses fresh and local ingredients to prepare old-school Italian classics. • 6 Wintonbury Mall, Bloomfield, 860-904-2111 *carboneskitchen.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$, WA

Carbone's Ristorante • ***Italian*** • **EP** This old-school, fine-dining Italian restaurant was established in 1938 and has survived as long as it has for a reason. Dishes include lobster risotto, grilled veal chop and eggplant, chicken and veal parmigiano. • 588 Franklin Ave., Hartford, 860-296-9646 *carbonesct.com*. Closed Sun. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$$, WA

Confetti • ***Italian*** • **EP** Offers Italian-American cuisine with a celebratory vibe. Also caters and operates the Big Red Truck food truck. • 393 Farmington Ave., Plainville, 860-793-8809 *idineconfetti.com*. Closed Mon. & Tues. D (Wed.-Sun.) SB, $$

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous white clam pizza is the standout, any pie here is worth the wait. • 1148 New Britain Ave., West Hartford, 860-236-7373; 221 Buckland Hills Drive, Manchester, 860-644-7333 *pepespizzeria.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $, WA

Grants Restaurant, Bar & Patisserie • ***Continental*** A West Hartford institution serving inventive dishes like braised lamb shank, pistachio-crusted Idaho trout and chocolate-caramel opera cake. • 977 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, 860-236-1930 *billygrant.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

Max Downtown • ***American*** • **EP** Features global cuisine, chophouse classics, a fine wine list and lighter fare in the tavern. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 185 Asylum St., Hartford, 860-522-2530 *maxrestaurantgroup.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D LS, $$$, WA

Max Fish • ***Seafood*** Lively, upscale fish house serving a daily selection of fresh seafood and great steaks. The Shark Bar is more casual, offering lighter fare and Max classics in an up-tempo environment. • 110 Glastonbury Blvd., Glastonbury, 860-652-3474 *maxfishct.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D LS, $$

Max's Oyster Bar • ***Seafood*** • **EP** Modern renditions of classic American seafood in an atmosphere reminiscent of a big-city oyster bar. • 964 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, 860-236-6299 *maxrestaurantgroup.com/oyster*. Open daily. L, D, LS (Sat.), $$$

The Mill on the River • ***American*** Pan-seared Chilean sea bass and pork chop Milanese are tops at this former gristmill. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 989 Ellington Road, South Windsor, 860-289-7929 *themillontheriver.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D SB, $$, WA

Millwright's Restaurant and Tavern • ***American*** • **EP** Tyler Anderson dazzled us for years at The Copper Beech Inn. Now, he's wowing all comers at this sparkling restaurant. • 77 West St., Simsbury, 860-651-5500 *millwrightsrestaurant.com*. Closed Mon.-Tues. D, $$$, WA

ON20 • ***Contemporary French / American*** • **EP** Savor panoramic city views and sophisticated atmosphere along with sumptuous seasonal cuisine. • 400 Columbus Blvd., 20th Floor, Hartford, 860-722-5161 *ontwenty.com*. L (Mon.-Fri.) D (Wed.-Sat.) L D, $$$, E

Plan B Burger Bar • ***Burgers*** • **RC** Gourmet burgers and a wide selection of beers and bourbons. • 120 Hebron Ave. #6, Glastonbury, 860-430-9737 *planbburger.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

Republic • ***Gastropub*** • **EP** Handcrafted beers, boutique wines and small-batch bourbons are offered at this high-end pub. • 39 Jerome Ave., Bloomfield, 860-216-5852 *republicct.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D LS, $$

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse • ***Steak*** Billed as "the steak that speaks for itself" the steaks served here are USDA Prime. In addition, the restaurant utilizes locally sourced produce in its recipes. • 2513 Berlin Tpke., Newington, 860-666-2202 *ruthschris.com*. Open daily. L (Sun.) D, $$$, WA

Sayulita • ***Mexican*** • **EP** Named for a Mexican fishing village, this restaurant has a party vibe and uses top-of-the-line ingredients. Specialties include a variety of tacos and Ceviche de Playa. • 865 Main St., Glastonbury, 860-430-9941 *cantinasayulita.com*. Open daily. D, L (Sat.-Sun.), $$, WA

Shady Glen • ***American*** A dairy bar/restaurant known for cheeseburgers and ice cream. • 840 Middle Tpke. E., Manchester, 860-649-4245; 360 Middle Tpke. W., Manchester, 860-643-0511. Open daily. L D, $, WA

Sorella • ***Italian*** A new kid on the block from restaurant pros Billy Carbone and Dan Keller, who own Dish across the street. • 901 Main St., Hartford, 860-244-9084 *sorellahartford.com*. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

Trumbull Kitchen • ***American*** "Global comfort food" is served at communal tables at this sophisticated city brasserie. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 150 Trumbull St., Hartford, 860-493-7417 *maxrestaurantgroup.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D LS, $$, E

Vinted Wine Bar & Kitchen • ***Tapas*** This exciting restaurant in Blue Back Square serves 68 wines by the glass along with an ambitious small-plates menu. • 63 Memorial Road, West Hartford, 860-206-4648 *vintedwinebar.com*. Open daily. D, $$, WA

The Willows • ***American*** • **EP** A suave boîte in the DoubleTree Hotel helmed by star chef Leo Bushey III. On the menu: vanilla-poached lobster, pot-au-feu and pork tenderloin roulade with sun-dried fruit. • 42 Century Drive, Bristol, 860-589-7766 *doubletree-bristol.com*. Open daily 5 to 10. D, $$$, WA

Litchfield County

Backstage • ***American*** Enjoy casual American fare prepared from scratch — salads and soups, creative small plates, hand-formed Angus patties on house-baked rolls — and 40 beers on tap. • 84 Main St., Torrington, 860-489-8900 *backstageeatdrinklive.com*. Open daily. L D LS SB, $$, E, WA

Carole Peck's Good News Cafe • ***New American*** Chef Carole Peck offers original dishes like warm crab taco and chicken tagine. • 694 Main St. S., Woodbury, 203-266-GOOD *good-news-cafe.com*. Closed Tues. L D, $$

Community Table • ***American*** • **EP** Chef Joel Viehland offers a seasonal menu using only ingredients grown, raised or foraged within a 200-mile radius. • 223 Litchfield Tpke., Washington, 860-868-9354 *communitytablect.com*. Closed Tues.-Wed. D SB, $$, WA

The Cookhouse • ***Barbecue*** • **EP** "Slo-smoked" baby-back ribs and pulled pork are the name of the game here. • 31 Danbury Road (Route 7), New Milford, 860-355-4111 *thecookhouse.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Gifford's • ***American*** Enjoy a melting pot of a menu that features the flavors of Thailand, Tuscany, Vietnam, Morocco and France, as well as local farm fare. In winter, guests can enjoy a fireplace; in summer, they can eat outside on an awning-shaded dining terrace. • 9 Maple St., Kent, 860-592-0262 *jpgifford.com*. Closed Mon.-Tues. D, $$$, WA

The Hopkins Inn • ***Austrian/American*** • **EP** A country inn with an Old World atmosphere known for wiener schnitzel, backhendl and fresh-caught trout. • 22 Hopkins Road, Warren, 860-868-7295. Closed Mon. B L (Tues.-Sat.) D, $$$

John's Café • ***New American*** Popular spot for New American cuisine with a Mediterranean accent: grilled pizzas, ricotta gnocchi and salmon with morels. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 693 Main St. S., Woodbury, 203-263-0188 *johnscafe.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

Litchfield Saltwater Grille • ***Seafood*** Casual and fine dining with seafood, raw bar, meat, vegetarian and kids menu options. Happy hour is Mon.-Fri 4-6 p.m., and the lounge is open late Fri. & Sat. Outdoor patio and private dining available. • 26 Commons Drive, Route 202, Litchfield, 860-567-4900 *litchfieldsaltwatergrille.org*. Open daily. $$, E, WA

Mountainside Café • ***Farm to Table*** Modern rustic cafe offers up a fresh approach to American classics, such as the Country Burger and the Johnny Cash Skillet, in a warm and casual atmosphere. • 251 Route 7 South, Falls Village, 860-824-7876 *mountainside.com/cafe*. Open daily. B L D SB, $, WA

The Painted Pony • ***American*** This cozy spot offers a variety of dishes, from prime rib and steak to pasta and pizza. Live entertainment every Thurs. • 74 Main St. (Route 61), Bethlehem, 203-266-5771 *paintedponyrestaurant.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $, E, WA

Patty's Restaurant • ***American*** A delightful breakfast experience with generous portions — the menu is influenced by season and might include treats such as raisin French toast or apple, walnut and cranberry pancakes. • 499 Bantam Road, Litchfield, 860-567-3335. Open daily. B L, $

The Restaurant at Winvian Farm • ***French*** • **EP** Chef Chris Eddy constantly changes the menu, using simple and seasonal ingredients accented with unusual and fresh findings. • 155 Alain White Road, Morris, 860-567-9600 *winvian.com*. Closed Mon.-Tues. L D, $$$, WA

Scarpelli's • ***American*** Since 1936, Scarpelli's has been offering classic comfort foods like chicken parmigiana, meat loaf, fried chicken and fish-and-chips. • 865 Migeon Ave., Torrington, 860-482-7977 *scarpellisclassiccatering.com*. Open daily. B L D, $$, WA

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The Venetian Restaurant • ***Classic Italian*** Enjoy seasonal specials and traditional fare like house-made pasta. • 52 East Main St., Torrington, 860-489-8592 *thevenetianrestaurant.com*. Closed Tues. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

The Village Restaurant • ***American*** Historic pub and restaurant in the heart of Litchfield. Veal Bartalucci, Parmesan-and-horseradish-encrusted salmon and cheese-burgers top the menu. • 25 West St., Litchfield, 860-567-8307 *village-litchfield.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

West Street Grill • ***New American*** • **EP** An innovative restaurant with a star-studded clientele and menu to match. Serves wild fish, handmade pasta and organic salads. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 43 West St., Litchfield, 860-567-3885 *weststreetgrill.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$$, E (on weekends), WA

The White Hart • ***Farm to Table*** • **EP** High-quality cuisine made from an A-list of farm sources served in a rustic, recently remodeled historic country inn dating to 1805. • 15 Under Mountain Road, Salisbury, 860-435-0030 *whitehartinn.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

The White Horse Country Pub • ***American*** • **EP** Serves American pub favorites like burgers, ribs and seafood bake, along with some English ones — shepherd's pie, fish-and-chips and bangers and mash. Outdoor dining in warmer months provides a delightful experience. • 258 New Milford Tpke., Washington, 860-868-1496 *whitehorse-countrypub.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Winvian • ***American*** • **EP** Simplicity and indulgence converge with fresh and spontaneous farm-to-table menus and an ecclectic wine selection. Reservations are required. • 155 Alain White Road, Morris, 860-567-9600 *winvian.com*. Closed Tues. L (Sat.-Sun.), D (Wed.-Mon.), $$$

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26 Commons Drive (just off 202), Litchfield, CT 06759

Yokohama • ***Japanese*** • **EP** Delicious tempura and teriyaki dishes, plus sushi and sashimi is served at this beloved New Milford restaurant. • 131 Danbury Road, New Milford, 860-355-0556 *yokohama-sushi.net*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

| Middlesex County |

Alforno • ***Northern Italian*** Known for a great selection of house-made ravioli, including veal osso buco with fresh ricotta ravioli, butternut squash ravioli and wild boar ravioli, as well as tagliatelle Bolognese and arugula chicken. • 1654 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, 860-399-4166 *alforno.net*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Angelico's Lake House • ***American*** Overlooking Lake Pocotopaug, Angelico's features great outside dining and a tiki hut. Try the spinach risotto, roast prime rib, stuffed salmon or lobster ravioli with sautéed shrimp. • 81 North Main St., East Hampton, 860-267-1276 *angelicoslakehouse.com*. Open daily. L D LS SB, $$, E, WA

Baci Grill • ***Modern Italian*** Try house specialties like grilled mango-and-chipotle pork loin, chicken sausage and broccoli rabe pasta, Guinness skirt steak and scallop risotto at this casual, trendy restaurant. • 134 Berlin Road, Cromwell, 860-613-2224 *bacigrill.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, E, WA

Boom • ***American*** Dine on the outdoor deck overlooking a sea of yachts. Favorites include fried oysters, filet mignon Oscar with crabmeat-sherry cream and BBQ duck quesadillas. • Brewer's Pilots Point Marina, 63 Pilots Point Drive, Westbrook, 860-399-2322 *boomrestaurant.net*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Chester's Barbecue • ***Barbecue*** Mouthwatering, slow-cooked barbecue is the name of the game here. Choose from BBQ favorites like smoked ribs, chicken, brisket and burnt ends. • 10 West Main St., Clinton, 860-669-6868 *chestersbbq.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

Chicago Sam's • ***American*** This beloved sports bar takes sports fanaticism to new heights, showing every NFL, MLB, NBA and NHL game. When it comes to the menu, this place is also a winner. • 51 Shunpike Road, Cromwell, 860-635-1860 *chicagosams.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $, E, WA

Cuckoo's Nest • ***Mexican*** • **RC** Housed in a 200-year-old barn, Cuckoo's Nest has been serving nachos, fajitas, Cajun shrimp and scallops for more than 35 years. • 1712 Post Road, Old Saybrook, 860-399-9060 *cuckoosnest.biz*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, E, WA

Dattilo Fine Italian at Water's Edge Resort and Spa • ***Italian*** Enjoy spectacular ocean views as you indulge in award-winning dishes like Torte di Granchio (lump crab cakes with watermelon radish slaw and caper aioli), Gnocchi Cosentina and Tagliata Toscana. • 1525 Boston Post Road., Westbrook, 860-399-5901 *watersedgeresortandspa.com*. Open daily. B L D SB, $$$, E

Eli Cannon's Tap Room • ***Beer Bar*** • **EP** The Connecticut innovator of the modern beer bar, Eli Cannon's has been pouring sought-after brews since long before it was a trendy business model. Food favorites here include the famous nachos, chicken wings (there's 20 custom sauces), the classic cannon burger and the blackened chicken wrap. • 695 Main St., Middletown, 860-347-3547 *elicannons.com*. Closed Mon. L (Fri.-Sun.) D LS, $$, WA

Fresh Salt • ***American*** • **EP** Drink in the glorious water view while savoring cioppino, merlot-braised short ribs, osso buco and Block Island swordfish. • 2 Bridge St., Old Saybrook, 860-395-2000 *saybrook.com*. Open daily. B L (Mon.-Sat.) D SB, $$$, E, WA

Gelston House • ***American*** This historic restaurant offers unparalleled views of the Goodspeed Opera House and the Connecticut River. Entrées include pan-seared duck breast, filet mignon and lamb ragout. • 8 Main St., East Haddam, 860-873-1411 *gelstonhouse.com*. Closed Mon. L (Tues.-Sun.) D LS SB, $$, E, WA

The Good Elephant Bistro • ***Vietnamese*** The elephant in this room is flavor—and lots of it. From five-spice duck to sushi-grade tuna, this restaurant serves the salty, sour, bitter and sweet flavors of Vietnamese cuisine. • 59 Main St., Chester, 860-526-5301 *goodelephantcafe.com*. Open Wed-Sat. D, $$

The Griswold Inn • ***American*** The beloved 1776 "Gris" features classic New England cuisine in the dining room, small plates and 50 wines by the glass in the wine bar, and a lively taproom. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 36 Main St., Essex, 860-767-1776 *griswoldinn.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$$, E, WA

Market Place Kitchen & Bar Conquers New Territories

Locavores, you have another reason to cheer! The Market Place restaurants are expanding. As the popularity of farm-to-table restaurants continues to rise, the Market Hospitality Group continues to delight food lovers with distinctive places to dine. There are currently Market Place Kitchen & Bar restaurants in Danbury, CT, Woodbury, CT, and West Dover, VT, and they are excited to be expanding into Avon in early 2017 and Newtown by Summer 2017 with restaurants that offer their signature style and great food to more people.

These upscale, casual restaurants have floor-to-ceiling wine racks, huge fireplaces, remarkable combinations of brick and reclaimed wood and private party rooms that can accommodate various party sizes. They offer fresh, seasonal, organic and locally sourced food when possible. The rest of the best comes from — Allen Brothers steaks from Illinois, free-range chicken from Pennsylvania, Berkshire pork, gin and bourbon from Litchfield Distillery, and craft beers from Black Hog Brewing Co., Two Roads Brewing Co. and Relic Brewing Co., just to name a few. There are no secrets at these restaurants — the warm and cheerful staff members will cite the source. And there are outstanding kids' menus and many vegan and gluten-free dishes and beers for those with dietary restrictions. Hey, good food is something we can all agree on!

The 189 Sports Café in Brookfield has food you don't expect at sports bars as well as a craft-centric, ever-changing beer menu. The café holds several benefits each year to support The Special Olympics of Connecticut, the American Cancer Society and Ann's Place, a community-based cancer support center. Ski lovers will make their vacations more memorable when they come to the Market Place at Mount Snow and The Last Chair Bar & Grill at Mount Snow.

MP Catering will bring the Market Place restaurants' great fare to your venue. Connecticut has great farms and great wineries, and it's always nice to support local businesses. Whatever type of event you are planning, MP Catering will make it better with great food.

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Iguanas Ranas Taqueria • ***Mexican*** • **EP** Affordable, fresh and authentic Mexican food served fresh and with home-style taste. • 484 Main St., Middletown, 860-346-8630 *iguanasranastaqueriact.com*. Closed Sun. L D, $

La Boca Mexican Restaurant and Cantina • ***Mexican*** Sizzling fajitas, carne asada, grilled mahi mahi and the La Boca classic burrito are just some of the Mexican cuisine favorites offered at this fun restaurant with a patio and live music. • 337 Main St., Middletown, 860-347-4777 *labocamexican.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, E, WA

La Foresta • ***Italian*** • **RC** This big and beautiful ristorante serves garden-fresh, ingredient-driven fine Northern Italian cuisine. It also has a VIP wine cellar and one of the state's best wine selections. • 163 Route 81, Killingworth, 860-663-1155 *laforestarestaurant.com*. Open daily. D, $$, WA

Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale • ***Seafood*** This Connecticut institution serves all manner of fresh seafood, from hot lobster rolls to baked stuffed shrimp to fried whole-belly clams. • 86 Boston Post Road, Westbrook, 860-669-0767 *ljfishtale.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Luce • ***American*** Have your aged steaks grilled over wood chips--there are 20 types to choose from. Offers seafood, an extensive wine list and a great bar atmosphere. • 98 Washington St., Middletown, 860-344-0222 *lucect.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Luigi's • ***Italian*** Enjoy classic Italian favorites like seafood cannelloni, chicken leonardo, veal parmigiana, whole clams, prime rib and other dishes. • 1295 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, 860-388-9190 *luigis-restaurant.com*. Closed Mon. (except in July and Aug.). D, $$, WA

Mondo Restaurant • ***Pizza*** This casual, family-owned restaurant specializes in brick-oven, New York-style thin crust pizza. There is also a beer and wine bar. • 10 Main St., Middletown, 860-343-3300 *mondomiddletown.com*. Open daily L D, $$, WA

Puerto Vallarta • ***Mexican*** • **RC** Authentic, traditional Mexican cuisine is prepared fresh daily – sometimes even at your table – mixing time-honored recipes with innovative culinary techniques. • 200 Main Metro Square, Middletown, 860-852-0080 *puertovallartausa.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

River Tavern • ***American*** • **EP** Farm-to-table pioneer Jonathan Rapp wears top toque at this town fixture. On the menu: made-to-order guacamole, grilled Stonington swordfish, New York strip. • 23 Main St., Chester, 860-526-9417 *rivertavernrestaruant.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

The Tea Kettle Restaurant • ***Breakfast*** This breakfast and brunch destination specializes in gluten-free and paleo dishes, from pancakes and muffins to waffles and eggs benedict. The jumbo-size pancakes are popular. • 1395 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, 860-577-5039 *theteakettlerestaurant.com*. Open daily. B L, $, E, WA

Westbrook Lobster • ***Seafood*** • **RC** Offers the freshest fish possible in dishes ranging from baked stuffed lobster to teriyaki-grilled salmon to seafood paella.. • 346 E. Main St., Clinton, 860-664-9464; 300 Church St., Wallingford, 203-265-5071 *westbrooklobster.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

| New Haven County |

116 Crown • ***American Tapas / Small Plates*** • **EP** Dine on sliders, pizzettes and charcuterie and cheese in a loungelike atmosphere — along with exciting and creative house cocktails. • 116 Crown St., New Haven, 203-777-3116 *116crown.com*. Closed Mon. D LS, $$, E, WA

121 Restaurant @ OXC • ***American*** Watch the planes take off and land at 121, located at the Waterbury-Oxford Airport. The menu runs from great pizzas and burgers to an eclectic mix of American favorites. • 7 Juliano Drive, Oxford, 203-262-0121 *121restaurantgroup.com/oxc*. Closed Mon. L D, $$, E, WA

Adriana's • ***Italian*** • **EP** Old-fashioned Italian fare, served up in generous portions. • 771 Grand Ave., New Haven, 203-865-6474 *adrianasnewhaven.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.), D, LS (Fri.-Sat.), $$, WA

Archie Moore's Bar & Restaurant • ***American*** Casual pub-style dining with burgers, nachos and salads. And don't miss the award-winning buffalo chicken wings. • 188½ Willow St., New Haven, 203-773-9870; 39 N. Main St., Wallingford, 203-265-7100; 15 Factory Lane, Milford, 203-876-5088; 17 Elizabeth St., Derby, 203-732-3255 *archiemoores.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $

Baja's • ***Mexican*** • **EP** Casual, authentic Mexican food. • 63 Boston Post Road, Orange, 203-799-2252. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Ballou's Restaurant & Wine Bar • ***Italian*** A casual and relaxed wine bar. Full menu with fondue and much more. Has an outdoor, dog-friendly patio and gluten-free menu. • 51 Whitefield St., Guilford, 203-453-0319 *ballouswinebar.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

Barcelona Restaurant & Wine Bar • ***Spanish Mediterranean*** • **EP** Hip restaurant serving Spanish and Mediterranean cuisine — including tapas, hot and cold. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 155 Temple St., New Haven, 203-848-3000 *barcelonawinebar.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Bin 100 • ***Mediterranean*** Feast on delicious Mediterranean cuisine elegantly served in a spacious dining room. • 100 Lansdale Ave., Milford, 203-882-1400 *bin100restaurant.com*. Open daily. D SB, $$, E, WA

Bistro Mediterranean • ***Mediterranean*** • **RC** This casual and relaxed restaurant has Spanish and Mediterranean influences and offers a variety of beloved dishes including scallops parrilla, paella and brussels sprout salad. • 383 Main St., East Haven, 203-467-2500 *bistromediterraneanandtapasbar.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Ceviche • ***Latin Fusion*** • **EP** Several styles of ceviche are offered here. In addition, the place features a variety of sizzling Latin dishes, cocktails and 30 types of tapas. Try the Granada Mojito, which features pomegranate flavors. • 530 Middlebury Road, Middlebury, 203-527-7634 *cevichelatinkitchen.com*. Closed Mon. L (Wed.-Thurs.) D LS, $$, WA

Chip's Family Restaurant • ***American*** • **RC** Famous for its perfect pancakes, Chip's also has a creative lunch and dinner menu, and guests are welcome to BYOB. • 321 Boston Post Road, Orange, 203-795-5065 *chipsrestaurants.com*. Open daily. B L D, $

Claire's Corner Copia • ***Vegetarian*** • **EP RC** Café-style spot offering globe-trotting dishes like organic-mushroom crêpes, Bengal curry, Irish breakfast and Lithuanian coffee cake. • 1000 Chapel St., New Haven, 203-562-3888 *clairescornercopia.com*. Open daily. B L D SB, $, WA

Colony Grill • ***Pizza*** This Irish tavern's single menu offering is its one-of-a-kind, thin crust pizza served with a signature "hot oil" topping. • 36 Broad St., Milford, 203-876-1935 *colonygrill.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

Consiglio's Restaurant • ***Classic Italian*** Family-owned and -run for more than 70 years, Consiglio's is known for classic home-style favorites like homemade cavatelli and braciole, eggplant rollatini and lasagna. • 165 Wooster St., New Haven, 203-865-4489 *consiglios.com*. Open daily. L (Tues.-Fri., Sun.) D, $$

Coromandel Cuisine of India • ***Indian*** • **EP** Wide range of tasty Indian fare is served in a small, tastefully done space. • 185 Boston Post Road, Orange, 203-795-9055 *coromandelcuisine.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

D'Vine Bistro • ***French-American*** French-American fusion served up in small plates or entree sizes, with a large number of gluten-free options. Patio dining available. Located on the Guilford Green. • 25 Whitfield St., Guilford, 203-458-1300 *dvinebistro.net*. Closed Mon. L (Tues.-Sat.) D, $$$, E, WA

Dino's Seafood • ***Seafood*** This family-run favorite of local North Haven diners for more than four decades prides itself on serving high-quality seafood with the taste of love and joy in every order. Customer favorites include strip clams, fritters, lobster rolls, and top-split hot dogs accompanied with a local craft beer. • 540 Washington Ave., North Haven, 203-239-5548 *dinosseafood.com*. Closed Mon. L D, $, WA

Elm City Social • ***American*** • **EP** Features creative and upscale pub-friendly fare in a visually impressive setting. There is also an assortment of excellent cocktails offered. • 286 College St., New Haven, 475-441-7436 *elmcitysocial.com*. Open daily. L D, LS, $$, WA

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous white clam pizza is the standout, just about any pie here is worth the wait. • 157 Wooster St., New Haven, 203-865-5762 *pepespizzeria.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $, WA

Geronimo Tequila Bar & Southwest Grill • ***Southwestern Fusion*** • **EP** Mix of traditional Native American, Mexican, Spanish and Anglo-American fare, with bold flavors and authentic ingredients. • 271 Crown St., New Haven, 203-777-7700 *geronimobarandgrill.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$

Goodfellas Restaurant • ***Italian*** • **EP RC** The extensive menu is a veritable Best Hits of Italy, featuring pastas and gnocchi, pork chop Milanese, steak pizzaiola, veal saltimbocca and the chef's signature filet cognac. • 702 State St., New Haven, 203-785-8722 *goodfellasrestaurant.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Heirloom • ***Modern Continental*** • **EP** Chef Carey Savona serves dishes like crab cakes with fennel and vermouth butter and herbed gnocchi with rapini and tomatoes. • The Study at Yale, 1157 Chapel St., New Haven, 203-503-3919 *heirloomnewhaven.com*. Open daily. B L (Mon.-Sat.) D SB, $$, WA

Home • ***American*** Whether in the main "dining room" or the "living room" lounge, Home offers up locally sourced food and a wide selection of regional craft brews to make its guests feel comfortable and comforted. • 1114 Main St., Branford, 203-483-5896 *www.homerestaurantct.com*. Closed Mon. L D, $$, E

J. Christian's • ***New American*** A smart, lively restaurant and lounge that takes no shortcuts in preparing New American cuisine with a Southern accent. • 9 North Main St., Wallingford, 203-265-6393 *jchristians.com*. Closed Mon. L D, $$

L'Orcio • ***Contemporary Italian*** • **EP** This upscale contemporary restaurant features an outdoor patio and a menu of house-made pastas, grilled whole fish and steaks with seasonal cuisine. • 806 State St., New Haven, 203-777-6670 *lorcio.com*. Closed Mon. L (Fri.) D, $$

La Tavola Ristorante • ***Classic Italian*** Enjoy a twist on classic Italian cuisine with prosciutto-wrapped figs, pumpkin ravioli and pepper-encrusted Ahi tuna. • 702 Highland Ave., Waterbury, 203-755-2211 *latavolaristorante.com*. Closed Sun. L D, $$, WA

Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale • ***Seafood*** • **EP RC** This Connecticut institution serves all manner of fresh seafood, from hot lobster rolls to baked stuffed shrimp to fried whole-belly clams. • 501 Long Wharf Drive, New Haven, 203-691-6619; 1301 Boston Post Road, Madison, 203-245-7289 *ljfishtale.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Mamoun's • ***Middle Eastern*** • **RC** Authentic Middle Eastern cuisine, made from scratch using fresh, natural ingredients, fine imported spices and signature recipes, served in a traditional environment. • 85 Howe St., New Haven, 203-562-8444 *mamouns.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

Miya's • ***Sushi*** • **EP** Sushi restaurant like no other, thanks to chef Bun Lai's unique creations. • 68 Howe St., New Haven, 203-777-9760 *miyassushi.com*. Closed Sun.-Mon. L D, $$$, WA

Moxie • ***American*** High-end American cuisine is the star here. Try the perfectly cooked burger that comes with awesome fries doused in kosher salt and malt vinegar powder. • 52 Wall St., Madison, 203-421-6963 *moxie-bar.com*. Closed Mon. D (Tues.-Sun) L (Fri.-Sun.), $$, WA

olea • ***Spanish*** • **EP** World-class, full-service Spanish restaurant, with a fun tapas bar. • 39 High St., New Haven, 203-780-8925 *oleanewhaven.com*. Closed Sun. D, $$$, WA

Park Central Tavern • ***American*** The dynamic weekly menu showcases signature entrées and classic favorites made with fresh New England ingredients. • 1640 Whitney Ave., Hamden, 203-287-8887 *parkcentraltavern.com*. Open daily. L D, $, WA

Ristorante Luce • ***Classic Italian*** Enjoy the double-cut veal chops, pane cotto, risotto pescatore and daily fish specials. Extensive wine list. • 2987 Whitney Ave., Hamden, 203-407-8000 *ristoranteluce.net*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$

Roìa • ***French/Italian*** This new spot in the Taft Hotel building evokes a golden era when romance reigned. On the menu: artichoke soup, chicken al mattone and panna cotta. • 261 College St., New Haven, 203-200-7045 *roiarestaurant.com*. Open Wed-Sun. D, $$, WA

CONTINUES ON **PAGE 122**

FIVE STAR PROFESSIONAL

2016 Connecticut Five Star Wealth Managers

A Select Award

Finding a wealth manager who suits your needs can be a daunting task. In fact, many consumers have a hard time figuring out where to even begin.

Sometimes, a few simple questions can set one off on the right path. Asking a wealth manager what makes working with him or her a unique experience can help you understand how they work and if their style meshes with your own. Further, asking a financial adviser to talk about any specialties they might have can help uncover skills you might find useful.

Ultimately, how do you find an experienced wealth manager who you feel comfortable working with? One who has high retention rates? One who has undergone a thorough complaint and regulatory review? One who has tenure in the industry?

Connecticut magazine and Five Star Professional partnered to find wealth managers who satisfy 10 objective eligibility and evaluation criteria. Among many distinguishing attributes, the average one-year client retention rate for this year's award winners is more than 96 percent. Although this list is a useful tool for anyone looking for help in managing their financial world or implementing aspects of their financial strategies, it should not be considered exhaustive. Undoubtedly, there are many excellent wealth managers who, for one reason or another, are not on this year's list.

In order to consider a broad population of high-quality wealth managers, award candidates are identified by one of three sources: firm nomination, peer nomination or pre-qualification based on industry standing. Self-nominations are not accepted. Connecticut award candidates were identified using internal and external research data.

Research Disclosures

- Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers.
- The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance.
- Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their clients' assets.
- The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or *Connecticut* magazine.
- Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future.
- Five Star Professional is not an advisery firm, and the content of this article should not be considered financial advice. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/selection methodology, go to www.fivestarprofessional.com.
- 1,985 award candidates in the Connecticut area were considered for the Five Star Wealth Manager award. 417 (approximately 22 percent of the award candidates) were named 2016 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Determination of Award Winners

Award candidates who satisfied 10 objective eligibility and evaluation criteria were named 2016 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Eligibility Criteria – Required

1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative.
2. Actively employed as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of five years.
3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review.
4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal firm standards.
5. Accepting new clients.

Evaluation Criteria – Considered

6. One-year client retention rate.
7. Five-year client retention rate.
8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered.
9. Number of client households served.
10. Education and professional designations.

Regulatory Review

As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not:

- Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine.
- Had more than a total of three customer complaints filed against them (settled or pending) with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process.
- Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority.
- Filed for personal bankruptcy.
- Been convicted of a felony.

Five Star Professional conducts a regulatory review of each nominated wealth manager using the Investment Adviser Public Disclosure (IAPD) website. Five Star Professional also uses multiple supporting processes to help ensure that a favorable regulatory and complaint history exists. Data submitted through these processes was applied per the above criteria:

- Each wealth manager who passes the Five Star Professional regulatory review must attest that they meet the definition of favorable regulatory history, based upon the criteria listed above.
- Five Star Professional promotes via local advertising the opportunity for consumers to confidentially submit complaints regarding a wealth manager.
- Five Star Professional contacted approximately 1 in 12 households identified as having a high propensity to use the services of wealth managers in order to provide consumers the opportunity to submit complaints regarding a wealth manager.

For more information on the program, go to www.fivestarprofessional.com/wm_program.

Andrew A. Agemy

Retirement Specialist

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Five-year winner Andrew Agemy; Daniel Agemy**

"In 1990, I began with the vision of building a true financial service company by serving and educating others. Receiving the Five Star Wealth Manager award for many, many years testifies of my clients and their continued trust and confidence. Thank you! It is truly a privilege to serve you!" says Andrew A. Agemy, founder and CEO of Agemy Financial Strategies. He sees a very bright future for continuing this heritage with the help of his son, Daniel, and their other team members. He added, "In these financially volatile times, reputation and experience goes a long way in preserving your wealth, your income and in creating a *durable* retirement strategy."

Prior to becoming a financial advisor, Mr. Agemy was in the ministry. He sees himself as the financial pastor of clients, shepherding and helping them to be good stewards of their wealth. He works almost exclusively with pre-retirees and retirees. He specializes in the universe of conservative, income-generating investments and strategies, thereby reducing risk without sacrificing return. As Mr. Agemy says, "Our focus is on serving our clients with an educational process, because an educated client is our best client." He believes education empowers his clients to make and realize solid financial decisions and allows them to remain in control.

AGEMY
FINANCIAL STRATEGIES, INC.

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Advisory Services offered through Agemy Wealth Advisors, LLC. Agemy Financial Strategies, Inc. and Agemy Wealth Advisors, LLC are related.

Retirement Income for the Best of Your Life

The Five Star Wealth Manager award, administered by Crescendo Business Services, LLC (dba Five Star Professional), is based on 10 objective criteria. Eligibility criteria – required: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Active as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not: A. Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine; B. Had more than a total of three customer complaints filed against them [settled or pending] with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process; feedback may not be representative of any one client's experience; C. Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority; D. Filed for personal bankruptcy; E. Been convicted of a felony); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers. Award does not evaluate quality of services provided to clients. Once awarded, wealth managers may purchase additional profile ad space or promotional products. The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their client's assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/selection methodology, go to fivestarprofessional.com. 1,985 Connecticut wealth managers were considered for the award; 417 (22 percent of candidates) were named 2016 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Valenti Wealth Management

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Five-year winner Joan Valenti

- Independent and unbiased financial strategies
- Exceptional service for long-lasting relationships
- Personalized approach to wealth building and wealth preservation

Joan Valenti, founder of Valenti Wealth Management, LLC, has been providing financial guidance for experienced investors since 1982. She leads an experienced team that specializes in helping clients pursue their retirement goals and distribute their assets in a tax-efficient client manner. They focus on wealth accumulation and preservation of wealth from generation to generation. Joan and her team understand the importance of providing dependable, trustworthy and objective advice through LPL Financial. They listen carefully to their clients' needs, identify the best options for their unique circumstances and guide them along the path of financial well-being. In March of 2016, Joan was recognized as one of America's top 1,200 Financial Advisors in *Barron's* magazine. This award is based on assets under management, revenue produced for the firm, regulatory record, quality of practice and philanthropic work.

Our mission and our promise is to help you grow and protect your assets by providing caring, personal service, in-depth knowledge and unbiased financial strategies.

VALENTI WEALTH MANAGEMENT
INDEPENDENCE POWERED BY LPL FINANCIAL

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Securities offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC.

Because Trust and Independence Matter

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Comprehensive Planning Associates, Ltd.

THREE-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Flora Mustafaj; Carol McClatchie; Matthew Brunner; Amanda Brunner; Three-year winner Gretchen Brunner**, CFP®

Making financial decisions has become increasingly difficult due to rapid changes in financial planning and investment solutions. We work side-by-side with our clients to offer a level of service that minimizes the anxiety that can accompany major life changes, such as retirement. It is important that you hire a trusted advisor who will "sit on the same side of the table" as you and your family to help you navigate through products and strategies to find what is appropriate for your particular situation.

Comprehensive Planning Associates, Ltd. (Compass) is a team of advisors and experts combined with a network of professionals covering nearly every aspect of the financial sphere, giving Compass a unique ability to create customized financial plans to match each client's individual needs and goals. We look at our clients' complete financial situation and recommend solutions that meet their particular needs and enhance their overall financial well-being. Through analysis and planning, we will help you address the delicate balance between living the life you want today and reaching your financial goals of the future.

Compass

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services@compass-ltd.com | www.compass-ltd.com

Insurance products and services, fee-based financial planning and investment advisory services are offered by Comprehensive Planning Assoc., Ltd. (Compass) a Registered Investment Advisor in the state of Connecticut. Securities are offered by Gretchen Brunner and Matthew Brunner through Gradient Securities, LLC (Arden Hills, MN, 866-991-1539). Member FINRA/SIPC. Comprehensive Planning Assoc., Ltd. (Compass) and Gradient Securities, LLC are not affiliated companies Gradient Securities, LLC and Comprehensive Planning Assoc., Ltd. (Compass) are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any government agency.

We Are as Dedicated to Our Clients' Success as They Are

The Five Star Wealth Manager award, administered by Crescendo Business Services, LLC (dba Five Star Professional), is based on 10 objective criteria. Eligibility criteria – required: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Active as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not: A. Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine; B. Had more than a total of three customer complaints filed against them [settled or pending] with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process; feedback may not be representative of any one client's experience; C. Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority; D. Filed for personal bankruptcy; E. Been convicted of a felony); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers. Award does not evaluate quality of services provided to clients. Once awarded, wealth managers may purchase additional profile ad space or promotional products. The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their client's assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/selection methodology, go to fivestarprofessional.com. 1,985 Connecticut wealth managers were considered for the award; 417 (22 percent of candidates) were named 2016 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Mangs Financial LLC

FOUR-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Adam Mangs,** Operations Manager; **Four-year winner David A. Mangs** Ph.D., CLU®, ChFC®

- Retirement and lifestyle income planning
- Estate and legacy planning
- Investment planning, asset allocation, portfolio monitoring and review

For more than three decades, Mangs Financial LLC remains committed to helping clients work toward achieving their unique goals and objectives, and addressing their financial concerns and opportunities through honest, unbiased, independent and personalized financial advice. We offer cost-effective, personalized service that exceeds client expectations. In retirement planning, we seek to provide lifetime income, indexed for inflation that we plan for sustaining both your standard of living and the quality of your lifestyle. We have a sincere concern for our clients' financial well-being as we prepare and guide them through life's transitions.

"We have a sincere concern for our clients' financial well-being as we prepare and guide them through life's transitions."

Mangs Financial LLC

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Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC.

Award based on 10 objective criteria associated with providing quality services to clients such as credentials, experience, and assets under management among other factors. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final lists of 2013 – 2016 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Wealth Management

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Lobo & Pascale Wealth Management, LLC

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Five-year winner Jeremy Lobo,** CFP®, CFS®, AIF®; **Three-year winner Christopher Pascale,** MBA, CFP®, CIMA®, AIF®

Areas of Focus: Retirement Income Planning and Wealth Management

- Providing comprehensive, independent and objective wealth management
- Helping clients navigate through a dynamic and complex world of investments
- Leveraging our extensive experience to help our clients reach their goals

Jeremy Lobo and Christopher Pascale are Certified Financial Planner™ professionals who have been helping investors reach their goals for nearly 20 years. Specializing in retirement income planning and wealth management for high-net-worth individuals, families and businesses, Chris and Jeremy are well-known both locally and nationally as financial planners and public speakers. They speak several times a year and are passionate about educating both their clients and the public on common retirement pitfalls and how to avoid them. Lobo and Pascale are honored to be recognized for this award.

LOBO & PASCALE
WEALTH MANAGEMENT, LLC

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Securities and Advisory Services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser.

Helping Our Clients Reach, Transition Into and Enjoy Retirement

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Lindsey Ferguson

Financial Advisor, Senior Vice President – Investments

2016 winner Lindsey Ferguson, Financial Advisor, Senior Vice President – Investments

WELLS FARGO ADVISORS

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2016 marks 27 years' experience helping clients achieve their goals. I've spent nearly a dozen of them working on Wall Street and in the financial district in Manhattan. In 2005 I came to Greenwich where I have been advising on portfolios locally.

Investments today are far more multifaceted than three decades ago. Computers and technology are rapidly changing the investment landscape and investor choices. We work to stay up-to-date on this sea change.

Often people ask what we do, or to define our process. I welcome the opportunity to sit with you and have a conversation. I'll buy the coffee and you do the talking. We are here to listen — and to help.

- *Team*: Every client is served by a dedicated local team in downtown Greenwich, CT — no single advisor has all the answers
- *Discovery*: Our team works tirelessly to completely understand your unique and total financial situation
- *Plan*: We work with you to develop a written investment plan, detailing your financial road map
- *Experience*: I have been a registered investment representative since 1989
- *Advocacy*: We work with your existing professionals (CPA's, attorneys) as your total financial advocate and trusted advisor
- *Transparency*: Fee-based asset-management, portfolio construction and review — we strive to earn our keep every day
- *Unbiased*: Every client receives personalized, local high-touch service and customized financial advice

NOT FDIC-Insured	NO Bank Guarantee	MAY Lose Value

Wells Fargo Advisors is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, Member SIPC, a registered broker-dealer and non-bank affiliate of Wells Fargo & Company. [CAR-1016-03794].

Transparent • Unbiased • Team

The Five Star Wealth Manager award, administered by Crescendo Business Services, LLC (dba Five Star Professional), is based on 10 objective criteria. Eligibility criteria – required: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Active as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not: A. Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine; B. Had more than a total of three customer complaints filed against them [settled or pending] with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process; feedback may not be representative of any one client's experience; C. Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority; D. Filed for personal bankruptcy; E. Been convicted of a felony); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers. Award does not evaluate quality of services provided to clients. Once awarded, wealth managers may purchase additional profile ad space or promotional products. The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their client's assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/selection methodology, go to fivestarprofessional.com. 1,985 Connecticut wealth managers were considered for the award; 417 (22 percent of candidates) were named 2016 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Beirne Wealth Consulting

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Four-year winner John Beirne,** CIMA®, Founding Partner, Chief Investment Officer; **Three-year winners Lise Robinson,** CFP®, CDFA®, Senior Wealth Advisor and **Dana McLaughlin,** CFP®, C(k)P®, Senior Wealth Advisor; **Five-year winner Jim Betzig,** CIMA®, Partner, CEO

Beirne Wealth Consulting Services, LLC (BWC) is a growing, privately-owned, SEC-registered investment advisor with approximately $2 billion in assets under management and 25 employees in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Florida. BWC provides independent, fee-based investment management services and customized financial planning solutions. Our institutional business provides consulting expertise to defined benefit and defined contribution plans, endowments, foundations and non-profit organizations. Our private clients include high-net-worth individuals and prominent families, many of whom bring complex wealth management challenges and multigenerational planning needs.

- 50-plus years of investment advice experience
- Named in *Financial Times'* Top 300 Registered Investment Advisers in 2014
- Named *FA Magazine*'s Top Firm in Connecticut in 2015 and No. 3 in Connecticut in 2016
- Named in *Barron's* Top 1,200 Advisors in 2016

Beirne Wealth Consulting Services, LLC

612 Wheelers Farms Road
Milford, CT 06461

Office: 203-701-8606
Fax: 203-701-8607

info@beirnewealth.com
www.beirnewealth.com

Outcomes Matter. Trust is Earned

Financial Network Limited

Left to right: **Two-year winner Michael Del Re, Jr.,** CLU®, ChFC®, AIF®;
Three-year winner Michael Del Re III, ChFC®, REBC®, AIF®;
Four-year winner Robert Pascarell, Sr., AIF®, RFC®

FNL was founded to provide personalized investment strategies for individuals and families and distinctive employee benefit programs for employers. Nearly 30 years later, we remain an independent, family-owned firm with the same mission and commitment: to provide comprehensive and innovative client solutions with the highest levels of professionalism and integrity.

Stable and committed to our clients, FNL has proven that quality and service are the standards of our practice.

- 401(k) and other employer-sponsored retirement plans
- Wealth management, financial and retirement planning for individuals and families
- Fiduciary responsibilities and best practices
- Formalized portfolio construction and risk management
- Independent and objective advice

Financial Network Limited

612 Wheelers Farms Road
Milford, CT 06461

Phone: 203-878-8194

www.fnlonline.com

Registered Representative, Securities offered through Cambridge Investment Research, Inc., a Broker/Dealer, Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment Advisor Representative, Cambridge Investment Research Advisors, Inc., a Registered Investment Advisor. Cambridge and Financial Network Limited are not affiliated.

Independence • Insight • Integrity

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Daryl LePage and Mark Fezza

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Five-year winners Mark Fezza,** CFP®, MBA, and **Daryl LePage,** CFP®

Brook Wealth Management's mission is to enrich its clients' lives by empowering them to make wise and prudent financial decisions through a process of consultation, education and continual guidance.

Utilizing their five-point approach to wealth management, Daryl and Mark are able to offer creative strategies to life's complicated issues.

Honored by this award, Daryl and Mark would like to thank their clients for their continued trust and confidence.

- Independent advice from independent advisors
- Wealth building strategies with an emphasis on protection
- Distribution planning with the goal of sustaining your desired lifestyle

Brook Wealth Management, LLC
Your Bridge to Financial Success

1090 Elm Street, Suite 102
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Office: 860-257-8688

info@brookwealth.com
www.brookwealth.com

Daryl LePage and Mark Fezza are Registered Representatives with, and securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC. Financial planning offered through Brook Wealth Management, LLC, a registered investment advisor and a separate entity from LPL Financial.

Your Bridge to Financial Success

The Jorgensen Group at Morgan Stanley

TWO-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Kevin O'Shea,** Registered Client Service Associate; **Two-year winner David Jorgensen,** Financial Advisor; **Rob Moquin,** Financial Advisor

The Jorgensen Group serves both corporate and individual clients. Our individual clients consist of business owners, executives, professional athletes, entertainers and retirees. Our corporate clients range from law firms, real estate developers and medical practices to contractors, waste and recycling companies and manufacturers. Our team's broad experience coupled with our individual areas of focus, provides our practice with the capability to serve a variety of clientele. We build deep relationships with our clients, allowing us to fully understand their goals and concerns in order to develop and execute the most appropriate strategies. 2015 – 2016 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner David Jorgensen.

- Financial and cash flow planning
- Investment management
- Risk management and insurance
- Corporate retirement and benefit plans
- Access to banking and lending solutions

Morgan Stanley

1 City Place, 21st Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

Office: 860-670-5454

david.jorgensen@morganstanley.com
www.morganstanleyfa.com/thejorgensengroup

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Financial Advice for the 21st Century

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FOUR-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Christopher Cardenas,** Account Manager; **Elsy Primozich,** Director Client Operations; **Four-year winner David Primozich,** Financial Advisor and Founder

David Primozich

CFP®, ChFC®, CLTC, AIF®

David Primozich, founder of Stone Arch Wealth Advisors, and his team help clients in all aspects of their financial lives. This begins with a comprehensive individualized analysis that's used to develop a customized plan addressing client priorities, retirement goals and estate planning concerns. Going forward client portfolios are monitored and updated along with the plan through regular face to face meetings. It's a personalized approach that combines genuine caring with exceptional credentials.

- Independent RIA firm providing customized financial life management
- Highly credentialed with over 20 years' experience
- Extensive knowledge of the Connecticut Teachers' Retirement Board system
- Objective advice by a fiduciary

STONE ARCH
WEALTH ADVISORS

1781 Highland Avenue, Suite 208
Cheshire, CT 06410

78 Beaver Road, Suite 2C
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Office: 860-835-ARCH (2724)
www.stonearchwealth.com

Stone Arch Wealth Advisors, LLC is a registered investment advisor. This document is intended to provide general information about the Advisor. It is not intended to offer investment advice. Contact us for further information regarding investment products and services.

Financial Life Management

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Left to right: **Five-year winner Valerie B. Dugan,** Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor, CFP®; **Christina Esposito,** Senior Registered Associate

Valerie B. Dugan

Financial Advisor, Sr. Vice President, CFP®

Since 1987, my practice has been built on the foundation of personal relationships and the ultimate goal of seeking to do what is best for each client. My staff and I seek to deliver world-class service and diligently work to uncover strategies to coordinate and connect the many aspects of a client's financial life. We will help you navigate the financial markets and stay on course so that you may ultimately achieve your goals and objectives.

Valerie Dugan, Five Star Wealth Manager, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

- Experience, knowledge and commitment to service
- More than 29 years of market experience
- More than 60 percent of clients served for 10-plus years

Morgan Stanley

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Hartford, CT 06103

Office: 860-275-0779

valerie.b.dugan@morganstanley.com
www.morganstanleyfa.com/valerie_dugan

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Comprehensive Wealth Management

The Five Star Wealth Manager award, administered by Crescendo Business Services, LLC (dba Five Star Professional), is based on 10 objective criteria. Eligibility criteria – required: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Active as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not: A. Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine; B. Had more than a total of three customer complaints filed against them [settled or pending] with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process; feedback may not be representative of any one client's experience; C. Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority; D. Filed for personal bankruptcy; E. Been convicted of a felony); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers. Award does not evaluate quality of services provided to clients. Once awarded, wealth managers may purchase additional profile ad space or promotional products. The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their client's assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/selection methodology, go to fivestarprofessional.com. 1,985 Connecticut wealth managers were considered for the award; 417 (22 percent of candidates) were named 2016 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Ken Steeves, Jr.

Private Wealth Manager

CREATIVE PLANNING

Milford, CT 06460
Office: 203-605-7584
Steeves@thinkingbeyond.com
www.thinkingbeyond.com

- Comprehensive wealth management
- Customized investment portfolios
- Estate planning
- Tax planning
- Business succession planning

Investment management is the core of our service. We do not experiment with our clients' money, and we do not invest based on a hunch. For most of our clients the focus is capital preservation followed by growth, but each client has different needs and unique circumstances. We analyze all aspects of a client's current financial situation and desired outcomes prior to constructing a portfolio.

We Serve as a Fiduciary, With No Proprietary Products

Douglas M. Gordon

Financial Services Representative, Financial Advisor

FOUR-YEAR WINNER

NEW ENGLAND FINANCIAL GROUP
A member of the MassMutual Financial Group

65 LaSalle Rd., Ste. 200
West Hartford, CT 06107
Office: 860-313-4814
DouglasGordon@FinancialGuide.com
DougMGordon.com

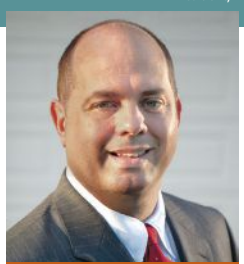
- Comprehensive investments strategies tailored to you
- Estate and wealth preservation strategies
- Personalized client service
- Million Dollar Round Table member, NAIFA member

Over the past 30 years Doug has developed extensive experience in the areas of investment, retirement and education funding strategies, as well as corporate benefits coordinating and estate conservation and analysis. Doug is committed to developing and maintaining long-term relationships.

MassMutual Financial Group is a marketing name for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) and its affiliated companies and sales representatives. Douglas M. Gordon is a registered representative of, and offers securities and investment advisory services through, MSI Financial Services, Inc. Member SIPC. www.sipc.org. L0916478406[exp0717][CT].

Timothy J. Bourdon

President, Accredited Investment Fiduciary



FIVE-YEAR WINNER

TJB Financial Services, Inc.

East Granby, CT 06026
North Haven, CT 06473
East Granby: 860-844-0300
North Haven: 203-936-7125
tbourdon@tjbfinc.com
www.tjbfinc.com

- Retirement and estate planning strategies
- Helping clients build, protect and preserve their assets
- Small-business planning (retirement plans and succession planning)

Our goal is simple: to help you feel comfortable seeking help with your financial goals and to assist you in a knowledgeable, courteous and professional manner. As an independent financial company, we help our investors decide which of the many financial options work best for them personally and/or for their business.

Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network, member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser.

Dedicated to Helping You Achieve Financial Success

Gary J. McDonagh

Wealth Manager/Investment Professional, AIF®, MBA

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Commonwealth Financial Network

238 Monroe Tpk., Ste. C-1
Monroe, CT 06468
Office: 203-261-3535
gmcdonagh@commonwealthmonroe.com
www.commonwealthmonroe.com

- Objective-driven financial strategies
- Focus on personal values and goals
- Simplified solutions to complex problems

Thank you to our clients for their continued support and trust in our services throughout the years. Our business is based on an independent, client-centered approach that is the cornerstone of our practice. The open communication we have with our clients allows us to build personalized strategies tailored to meet individual client needs. I am honored and grateful to receive this recognition for the fifth year in a row!

Securities and Advisory Services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser.

Planning for Your Future and Beyond

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Kevin Sullivan

MBA, CRC®, Senior Vice President

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

Webster Investments

130 Westbrook Rd.
Essex, CT 06426
Office: 860-767-0724

- Financial advice based on knowledge, experience and integrity

Prior to joining Webster Investments and LPL Financial, Kevin worked at Merrill Lynch as a senior financial advisor and certified financial manager, and then at Wells Fargo Advisors being recognized as one of the top financial advisors in the country as a Chairman's Counsel Premier Advisor. He earned his MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and successfully completed postgraduate studies at The Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC. Insurance products offered through LPL Financial or its licensed affiliates.

Not FDIC Insured	Not Bank Guaranteed	May Lose Value
Not Insured by any Federal Government Agency		Not a Bank Deposit

Helping You Make Smart Financial Choices

Steven T. Norris

Senior Financial Advisor, First Vice President – Investments

FIVE-YEAR WINNER

WELLS FARGO ADVISORS

90 State House Sq., 11th Fl.
Hartford, CT 06103
Office: 860-692-7212
Cell: 860-810-4088
steven.norris@wellsfargo.com

- Personal, professional and caring advice
- Experienced advice and guidance
- Tailored services and integrated strategies

I would like to thank our clients for their continued trust and confidence. Our team focuses on understanding our clients' specific needs, goals and objectives. Our advice and guidance assist clients in making informed financial decisions. Our focus is on preservation of assets as well as the long-term growth of those assets. We develop portfolios that are customized both strategically and tactically.

Wells Fargo Advisors is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, Member SIPC, a registered broker-dealer and non-bank affiliate of Wells Fargo & Company. [CAR 1016-05615]

Investment and Insurance Products:

NOT FDIC-Insured	NO Bank Guarantee	MAY Lose Value

Committed to My Clients

Paul H. Poulin

CFP®, Vice President Investment Officer

WELLS FARGO ADVISORS

180 Glastonbury Blvd., Ste. 100
Glastonbury, CT 06033
Office: 860-368-6907
Fax: 860-368-6939
paul.poulin@wellsfargoadvisors.com
www.paulhpoulin.wfadv.com

For the last 16 years, Paul's personal and professional mission has been simple and straightforward:

- To help individuals plan, implement, and enjoy a successful retirement
- To empower clients to live for today while planning their family's legacy for tomorrow

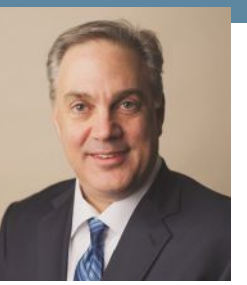
Paul is focused on building trusting, life-long relationships one client at a time. He prides himself in providing wealth management advice that is sound, independent, and unbiased, by delivering premier service, and by implementing a process-driven approach that best serves the complex planning needs of high net worth individuals.

Wells Fargo Advisors is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, Member SIPC [CAR 1016-02488].

We Represent You, Not a Group of Investment Products

Michael J. Lehrhaupt

President, CEO



STRATEGIES FOR RETIREMENT

5 Commerce Dr.
Shelton, CT 06484
Office: 203-372-4442
Michael@safemoneyrs.com
www.safemoneyrs.com

- *Safety first* with reasonable rates of return over time
- We keep it simple

For over 20 years, I have helped clients protect their assets and income due to risks they face in retirement while providing the highest level of service. We do what's best for our clients by providing principal protection (safety first) with reasonable rates of returns over time.

Fixed annuities guarantee that your money will earn at least a minimum interest rate. Fixed annuities may earn interest at a rate higher than the minimum but only the minimum rate is guaranteed. The issuer of the annuity sets the rates.

Educational Seminars Offered Throughout Connecticut

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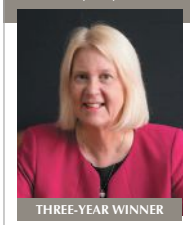
Carol Hopkins

MBA, CLTC, Financial Advisor, Financial Services Executive



THREE-YEAR WINNER

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chopkins@barnumfg.com
www.carolchopkins.com

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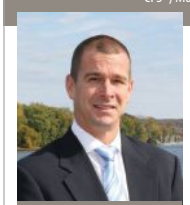

THREE-YEAR WINNER

Financial Benefits Unlimited, LLC

51R Meetinghouse Hill Rd.
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Phone: 860-349-3826
Fax: 860-349-3829
matthew.christopher@lpl.com
www.fbuct.com

Since 1976, Financial Benefits Unlimited, LLC has been helping individuals, families and small businesses simplify the complexity of managing their wealth. Matthew specializes in retirement income planning, distribution and strategic wealth management.

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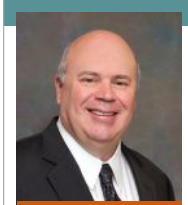
Christopher Beale

CFP®



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chrisbeale@newenglandcapital.com
www.newenglandcapital.com

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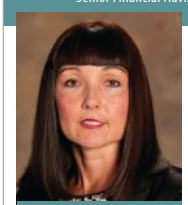
Naomi Bourque

Senior Financial Advisor, AAMS®, Sr. Vice President



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naomi.bourque@peoples.com
www.peoples.com/invest

Naomi has over 17 years of experience in the financial industry and is a FINRA-registered securities broker, investment advisor and principal. She also holds her life and health insurance licenses.

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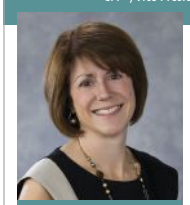

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Teresa_Prue@banksi.com
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With more than 20 years of investment and trust experience and as a Certified Financial Planner™ professional, I work to make certain that SI Financial Advisors'"you first" philosophy becomes a reality for our clients.

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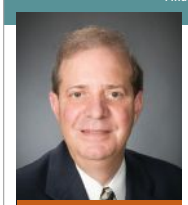
Theodore C. Bartosiak

Financial Advisor



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Ameriprise Financial

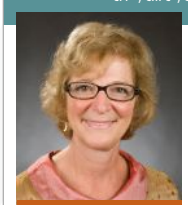
91 S Main St.
West Hartford, CT 06107
Phone: 860-521-4470
theodore.c.bartosiak@ ampf.com

As a financial advisor, I believe success should be measured not just by your financial well-being, but by how confident you feel about your future. 2012 – 2016 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner.

Investors should conduct their own evaluation of a financial professional as working with a financial advisor is not a guarantee of future financial success. Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., Member FINRA and SIPC.

Patricia Kane Gibeley

CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®, Financial Advisor



FIVE-YEAR WINNER

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My mission is to help my clients reach their financial goals through a personalized relationship based on thorough, knowledgeable advice. This focus is designed to help them reach their goals and give them confidence regarding their financial future. 2012 – 2016 Five Star Wealth Manager.

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John Grayeski
Vice President, AAMS®

People's Securities, Inc.
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John has 15 years of experience in the financial industry and is an FINRA-registered securities broker, investment advisor and principal. He also holds his life and health insurance licenses. John graduated from Sacred Heart University with a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science with an emphasis in finance.

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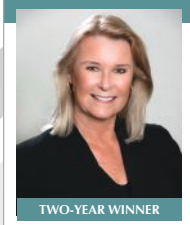
Sophie S. Stevens
Vice President



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Our business is about much more than financial services and insurance. It's about listening to what you have to say and putting your interests first.

Paul J. Mariano is a registered representative of, and offers securities and investment advisory services through, MML Investors Services, LLC. Member SIPC (www.sipc.org). Supervisory Office: 2321 Whitney Ave., Suite 402, Hamden, CT 06518, Tel: 203-288-5700. CRN-201810-205951.

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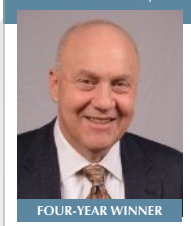
Financial Advisor, Certified Financial Planner™ practitioner



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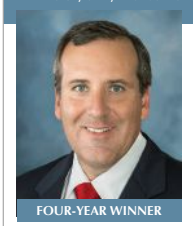

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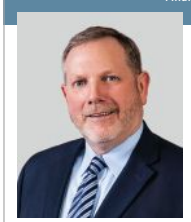
Financial Advisor



Infinex Financial Group

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jkuehnle@infinexgroup.com

John's work is primarily wealth or asset management. He helps families and businesses protect, accumulate, utilize and transfer their wealth (assets) in order to achieve their goals and objectives. His personal goal is to cultivate long-lasting relationships of mutual respect and trust.

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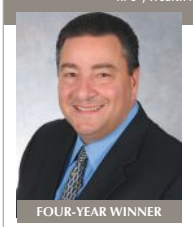
RFC®, Wealth Management Advisor



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Wilbur Mann · The Financial Architect

Paul Mariano · Charter Oak Insurance and Financial Services Company *Page 14*

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dining guide | new haven county

Señor Pancho's • ***Mexican*** Festive spot serving up terrific fresh salsa and margaritas to go with mole poblano, steak ranchero and fajitas. • 280 Cheshire Road, Prospect, 203-758-7788; 385 Main St. S., Southbury, 203-262-6988 *senorpanchos.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $, E, WA

Shell & Bones Oyster Bar & Grill • ***Seafood*** • **EP** This waterside restaurant features the celebrated creations of executive chef Arturo Franco-Camacho whose specialties include steak and seafood. • 100 South Water St., New Haven, 203-787-3466 *shellandbones.com*. Open daily. D L (Sat.-Sun.), $$$

Solun Tapas Bar & Restaurant • ***Spanish*** Solun is Spanish for "the sun and the moon" and this restaurant promises an escape from the ordinary with a wide array of tapas and other food classics from Spain. • 245 Amity Road, Woodbridge, 203-298-9741 *soluntapasbar.com*. Open daily. L (Tues.-Sun.) D (Tues.-Sat.) SB, $$, E, WA

Thali / Thali Too • ***Indian*** • **EP** Each location is chic, exotic and fun, but what ultimately distinguishes them is the flavorful food. • 4 Orange St., New Haven, 203-777-1177; 65 Broadway, New Haven, 203-776-1600 *thali.com*. Open daily. L, D, LS (Fri.-Sat.), SB, $$

Tre Scalini • ***Italian*** Elegantly decorated Trattoria-style restaurant offering traditional and creative Italian fare, with a full bar and an extensive wine list. A private banquet room is available, as is outside patio dining during the summer. • 100 Wooster St., New Haven, 203-777-3373 *trescalinirestaurant.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$, WA

The Wharf • ***New American*** • **EP** This spot at the Madison Beach Hotel serves up panko-crusted sea bass, duck two ways and bourbon-glazed pork tenderloin — with a side of water views. • 94 West Wharf Road, Madison, 203-350-0014 *madisonbeachhotel.com*. Open daily. B L D, $$$, WA

Zafra Cuban Restaurant & Rum Bar • ***Cuban*** With a collection of 300 different kinds of rum — one of the largest in the country — this New Haven establishment is Connecticut's first true rum bar. Small, dark and atmospheric, this hip locale features chef Tadahiro ("Haya") Hayasaka's subtle and sometimes fanciful take on Cuban soul food. • 259 Orange St., New Haven, 203-859-5342 *zafrarumbar.com*. Open daily. L (Tues.-Fri.) D LS, $$, WA

New London County

Al Dente • ***Italian*** Savor the mouthwatering flavors of frutti di mare, farfalle con pollo and medaglioni de manzo, followed up with cannoli or tiramisu at this Italian dining gem. • Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, 800-FOXWOODS *foxwoods.com*. Closed Mon.-Tues. D, $$$, E, WA

Alta Strada • ***Italian*** Try favorites like chittara with spicy lobster and fresh peas and grilled lamb chops with asparagus, potato and pickled onion salad. • MGM Grand at Foxwoods, 240 MGM Grand Drive, Mashantucket, 860-312-2582 *altastradarestaurant.com*. Open daily. L D LS SB, $$$, WA

Ballo Italian Restaurant & Social Club • ***Italian*** A sumptuous restaurant inspired by the magnificent 12th-century Abbey of San Galgano in Siena. On the menu: pizza and pasta, striped bass and veal porterhouse. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, 860-862-1100 *balloitalian.com*. Open daily. L (Sat.-Sun.) D LS (Fri.-Sat.), $$, WA

Bar Americain • ***American*** This brasserie serves up Bobby Flay specialties like lobster-avocado cocktails, buttermilk-fried chicken with biscuits — and big-time glamour. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, 860-862-8000 *baramericain.com*. Open daily. D, $$

The Bistro • ***Seafood*** Formerly Chaplin's & Friends, The Bistro specializes in locally caught seafood and regional American bistro favorites. Standouts include halibut sautéed with almonds, tuna with fresh mango and roasted red-pepper sauce and swordfish garnished with salsa. • 165 Bank St., New London, 860-990-5263 *chaplinsandfriends.com*. Open daily. L D, $$$, WA

Bleu Squid • ***American*** A bakery and cheese shop serving 30 cheeses and 40 different cupcakes. Also serves up grilled cheese sandwiches to go, freshly made and to order, including the best-selling lobster grilled cheese. • 27 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, 860-536-6343 *dessertsmysticct.com*. Open daily. L, $, WA

Bobby's Burger Palace • ***American*** This burger palace serves an array of burgers inspired by chef Bobby Flay's extensive travels. Each is a tribute to a different American regional flavor and tradition. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, 888-226-7711 *bobbysburgerpalace.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Breakwater • ***Seafood*** Located where Skipper's Dock used to be and offers stunning views and ocean-to-table dishes including some with Asian or Latin-American touches. • 66 Water St., Stonington, 860-415-8123 *breakwaterstonington.com*. Closed Mon.-Tues. L D, $$, WA

C.C. O'Brien's • ***Irish Pub*** A neighborhood sports pub with great food, friendly service, sports on 20 HDTVs and live entertainment on Saturday nights. • 8 Mechanic St., Pawcatuck, 860-599-2034 *ccobriens.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Caffé NV • ***Greek*** Favorites include pasta a la Philip and shrimp Saganaki at this restaurant with stained-glass windows and brick walls. • 57 Boston Post Road, Waterford, 860-444-8111 *cafenv.com*. Closed Sun. L D LS, $$, WA

The Captain Daniel Packer Inne • ***American*** This 1754 whaler's inn features a view of the Mystic River along with dishes like lemon pepper chicken, filet mignon and salmon • 32 Water St., Mystic, 860-536-3555 *danielpacker.com*. Open daily. L D, $$$, WA

Cedars Restaurant • ***American*** Offers lounge seating and cozy booths. Diners can count on the finest cuts of certified dry-aged prime beef and fresh seafood. • Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, 800-FOXWOODS *foxwoods.com*. Open daily. D, $$$, WA

Chester's Barbecue • ***Barbecue*** • **EP RC** Mouthwatering, slow-cooked barbecue is the name of the game here. Choose from BBQ favorites like smoked ribs, chicken, brisket and burnt ends. • 943 Poquonnock Road, Groton, 860-449-6868 *chestersbbq.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

The Chestnut Grille • ***American*** The winning seasonal menu here includes succulent treats such as pan-roasted duck breast and seared diver scallops. • The Bee and Thistle Inn, 100 Lyme St., Old Lyme, 860-434-1667 *beeandthistleinn.com*. Closed Sun.-Mon. D, $$$, E

David Burke Prime • ***American*** • **EP** An updated steakhouse menu with dry-aged beef, as well as terrific pork, chicken and seafood specialties. The steak served here is truly a cut above. • Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, 860-312-8753 *davidburke-prime.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$$

Flanders Fish Market & Restaurant • ***Seafood*** Flanders excels at lobster bisque, fish-and-chips and broiled seafood. Known for its bountiful Sunday buffet, fresh seafood market and New England clambakes. • 22 Chesterfield Road, East Lyme, 860-739-8866 *flandersfish.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous clam pizza is the standout, many others are also worth the wait. This expanding pizza empire continues to set the standard for Connecticut pies. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, 860-862-8888 *pepespizzeria.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $, WA

Frank's Gourmet Grille • ***American*** • **EP RC** In 2011, much to the dismay of local food fans, the original Frank's Gourmet Grille closed after nearly a decade in East Lyme. In 2015, the American restaurant made a triumphant return, this time in Mystic. • 56 Whitehall Ave., Mystic, 860-415-4666 *franksgourmetgrilleinmystic.com*. Open Tues.-Sun. L D, $$

Gaspar's Restaurant • ***New American Cuisine*** • **EP** Enjoy award-winning lobster bisque, sushi rolls and other sea-to-table delicacies made from fresh seafood. Ambience is old-school classy with white tablecloths, red roses and candlelight. There are also excellent grass-fed beef options • 385 Bank St., New London, 860-440-3663 *gasparsnewlondon.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

The Inishmor • ***Irish American Pub*** Get a taste of the old country at this authentic Irish pub where specialties include Gaelic favorites like chips and curry and shepherd's pie. • 20 Main St., Colchester *inishmorpub.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, E

Jasper White's Summer Shack • ***Seafood*** This award-winning restaurant features live lobster and crab, fried seafood, chowders and wood-grilled fish. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, 860-862-9500 *summershackrestaurant.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $$

Johnny's Peking Tokyo • ***Asian Fusion*** The finest in Asian-fusion cuisine, including ginger duck, shrimp and pork Hunan-style, sushi and sashimi. Dine in or order online for pickup. • 12 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, 860-572-9991 *johnnysushibar.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Kensington's at Norwich Inn • ***American*** A first-class restaurant serving gourmet food with an emphasis on natural meats, fresh, locally sourced produce and healthy preparations. • 607 West Thames St., Norwich, 860-425-3630 *thespaatnorwichinn.com/kensingtons*. Open daily. B L D SB, $$$, E, WA

Kitchen Little • ***American*** Enjoy a panoramic view of the Mystic River while dining on eggs Benedict, omelets and other savory egg dishes at this breakfast destination. • 36 Quarry Road, Mystic, 860-536-2122. Open daily for breakfast. B L (Mon.-Fri.) SB, $

The Old Lyme Inn • ***American*** • **EP** The Inn's restaurant and bar features a locally sourced menu with a modern twist on traditional dishes. • 85 Lyme St., Old Lyme, 860-434-2600 *oldlymeinn.com*. Open daily. L D, $$$, WA

Oyster Club • ***American*** • **EP** This popular place showcases food that travels the shortest distance from farm and sea to table, with seasonality and location determining the day's dishes. • 13 Water St., Mystic, 860-415-9266 *oysterclubct.com*. Closed Tues. L (Sat.) D SB, $$, WA

The Pita Spot • ***Middle Eastern*** • **RC** Serving Lebanese and Mediterranean food – fresh, artfully seasoned and cooked to perfection. • 45 Williams Ave., Mystic, 860-415-4656 *thepitaspot.com*. Closed Mon. L D, $

Red 36 • ***American*** • **EP** It's all about the sea at this waterside hotspot that offers delicious dinner with a great view. • 2 Washington St., Mystic, 860-536-3604 *red36ct.com*. Closed Mon. L D, $$

Sake Fusion Restaurant • ***Asian Fusion*** Indian pancakes with curry sauce and Vietnamese-style grilled pork are just a few of the Asian-fusion dishes on the menu. • 730 Main St. S., Southbury, 203-264-2888 *sakefusionsouthbury.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $, WA

Tolland County

Altnaveigh Inn & Restaurant • ***American*** This 1734 farmhouse serves filet mignon with port-wine reduction demiglace and pan-seared tuna with onion marmalade. • 957 Storrs Road, Storrs, 860-429-4490 *altnaveighinn.com*. Closed Sun.-Mon. L (Tues.-Fri.) D, $$$, WA

Asian Bistro • ***Asian Fusion*** A popular hibachi steakhouse/bar offering Asian-fusion dishes along with sushi and sashimi. • 95 Storrs Road, Mansfield, 860-456-8316 *asianbistromansfield.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Bidwell Tavern & Cafe • ***American*** • **EP** This 1822 Coventry tavern, once the town hall, offers prime rib, chicken wings and 24 beers on tap. • 1260 Main St. (Route 31), Coventry, 860-742-6978. Open daily. L D LS, $$, E, WA

The Blue Oak at the Nathan Hale Inn • ***American*** On the UConn campus, enjoy honest New England-style dishes and lighter fare. Great wine selection. • 855 Bolton Road, Storrs, 860-427-7888 *nathanhaleinn.com*. Open daily. B L D, $$

Elmo's Dockside • ***Seafood*** Known for fresh, local seafood, homemade clam chowder and lobster bisque, USDA High Choice beef, poultry and pasta dishes. • 48 Hartford Tpke., Vernon, 860-646-3474 *elmosdockside.com*. Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$

Lake View • ***Fresh Seafood / Italian*** • **EP** Fresh seafood, Italian dishes, paninis, salads, burgers and wings are served in a casual, romantic waterside setting. • 50 Lake St., Coventry, 860-498-0500 *coventrylakeview.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, E, WA

Little Mark's Big BBQ • ***Barbecue*** Little Mark's famous homemade sauces, such as Kansas City Sweet, Pork Pickin' Vinegar and Texas Hot, enhance the beef and pork ribs. • 226 Talcottville Road, Vernon, 860-872-1410 *littlemarksbbq.com*. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Pancho Loco • ***Mexican*** Don your shorts and Hawaiian shirt and try this Parrothead paradise for sizzling fajitas and chillin' margaritas. • 218 Talcottville Road, Vernon, 860-871-1819 *pancholoco.net*. Open daily. L D, $, E, WA

Rein's New York Style Deli-Restaurant • ***American*** • **RC** Bright and bustling Jewish deli serving everything from challah French toast and potato pancakes to pastrami reubens and cheese blintzes. • 435 Hartford Tpke., Vernon, 860-875-1344 *reinsdeli.com*. Open daily. B L D LS SB, $, WA

Tavern House Grill • ***American*** This pub-style sports bar features live entertainment and regular karaoke events. On the menu: steaks, burgers, grilled sandwiches and wings. • 200 Merrow Road, Tolland, 860-872-0332 *tavernhousegrill.com*. Open daily. L D SB, $, E, WA

Trattoria da Lepri • ***Italian*** This family-owned and -run eatery prepares dishes from scratch with local ingredients. • 89 West Road, Ellington, 860-875-1111 *trattoriadalepri.com*. Closed Sun.-Mon. D, $$, WA

True Blue Tavern at the Nathan Hale Inn • ***American*** Great casual dining in a fun atmosphere celebrating the spirit of UConn athletics. • 855 Bolton Road, Storrs, 860-427-7888 *nathanhaleinn.com*. Open daily. D, $, WA

Vernon Diner • ***Continental*** Enjoy anything from homemade French toast and Greek specialties to steak, seafood and pasta at this friendly spot in Vernon. • 453 Hartford Tpke., Vernon, 860-875-8812 *vernondiner.com*. Open daily. B L D LS, $, WA

Willington Pizza House • ***Pizza*** Unusual designer pizza concoctions, including red-potato and seafood casino. • 25 River Road (Route 32), Willington, 860-429-7433 *willingtonpizza.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

Windham County

85 Main • ***New American*** There's something for everyone at this Main Street fixture: from sushi to duck-liver pâté, pulled-pork barbecue to wild-mushroom ravioli. • 85 Main St., Putnam, 860-928-1660 *85main.com*. Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

The Courthouse Bar & Grille • ***American*** Serves 20 great appetizers, plus "arresting" main courses such as seafood Alfredo and Montreal sirloin. • 121 Main St., Putnam, 860-963-0074 *courthousebarandgrille.com*. Open daily. L D LS (weekends), $, WA

Fiesta Cinco De Mayo • ***Mexican*** A festive spot offering pollo salsa verde, carne asada and great guacamole. • 1228 Main St., Willimantic, 860-423-9524. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Golden Lamb Buttery • ***American*** • **EP** In a barn overlooking a 1,000-acre farm, dinner here might be roast duckling, chateubriand or honey-glazed rack of lamb. • 199 Bush Hill Road, Brooklyn, 860-774-4423 *thegoldenlamb.com*. Closed Sun.-Mon. L D (Fri.-Sat.), $$$, E, WA

Hank's Restaurant • ***American*** A family place serving home-style chowders, lobster salad rolls and prime rib. • 416 Providence Road, Brooklyn, 860-774-6071 *hanksrestaurant.com*. Open daily. L D, $$

The Heirloom Food Company • ***Vegan*** • **EP** Organic cafe & juice bar offering locally sourced, organic ingredients. • 630 N. Main Street, Danielson, 860-779–3373 *eatheirloomfood.com*. Closed Sun.-Mon. B L, $

The Inn at Woodstock Hill • ***American*** The menu at this historic estate includes shrimp-and-sea-scallop stir-fry and duckling à l'orange. • 94 Plaine Hill Road, Woodstock, 860-928-0528 *woodstockhill.com*. Open daily. L (Thurs.-Sat.) D SB, $$$, WA

The Mansion at Bald Hill • ***American*** The pan-seared diver scallops with jumbo shrimp is tops, and don't skip the lobster mac 'n' cheese. • 29 Plaine Road, South Woodstock, 860-974-3456 *mansionatbaldhill.com*. Closed Mon. D, $$$, WA

Mozzarella's Grill & Bar • ***American / Italian*** Great family restaurant with a warm, cozy atmosphere serving fresh burgers, steaks, seafood, and Italian specialties. • 460 Hartford Tpke., Dayville, 860-774-3434 *mozzarellasgrill.com*. Closed Fri.-Sun. B L D, $, E, WA

Someplace Special Pizza • ***Italian*** Serves Greek-style pizza, steaks, seafood and pastas at reasonable prices. • 58 Main St., Putnam, 860-928-2884 *someplacespecialrestaurant.com*. Open daily. L D, $, WA

Willimantic Brewing Co. / Main Street Café • ***Brew Pub*** • **EP** This pioneering brewery is located within a historic U.S. Post Office building. Beers are brewed in full view of diners. Try the ale-steamed mussels. Other Connecticut craft beers available. • 967 Main St., Willimantic, 860-423-6777 *willibrew.com*. Open daily. L (Tues.-Sun.) D, $$, WA

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CPTV SPORTS

TIP-OFF Classic

2ND ANNUAL CPTV SPORTS TIP-OFF CLASSIC

Tuesday, December 20, 2016 | 4:45 p.m.

Maloney High School | Meriden, CT

Featuring three matchups of Connecticut's top boys and girls high school basketball teams

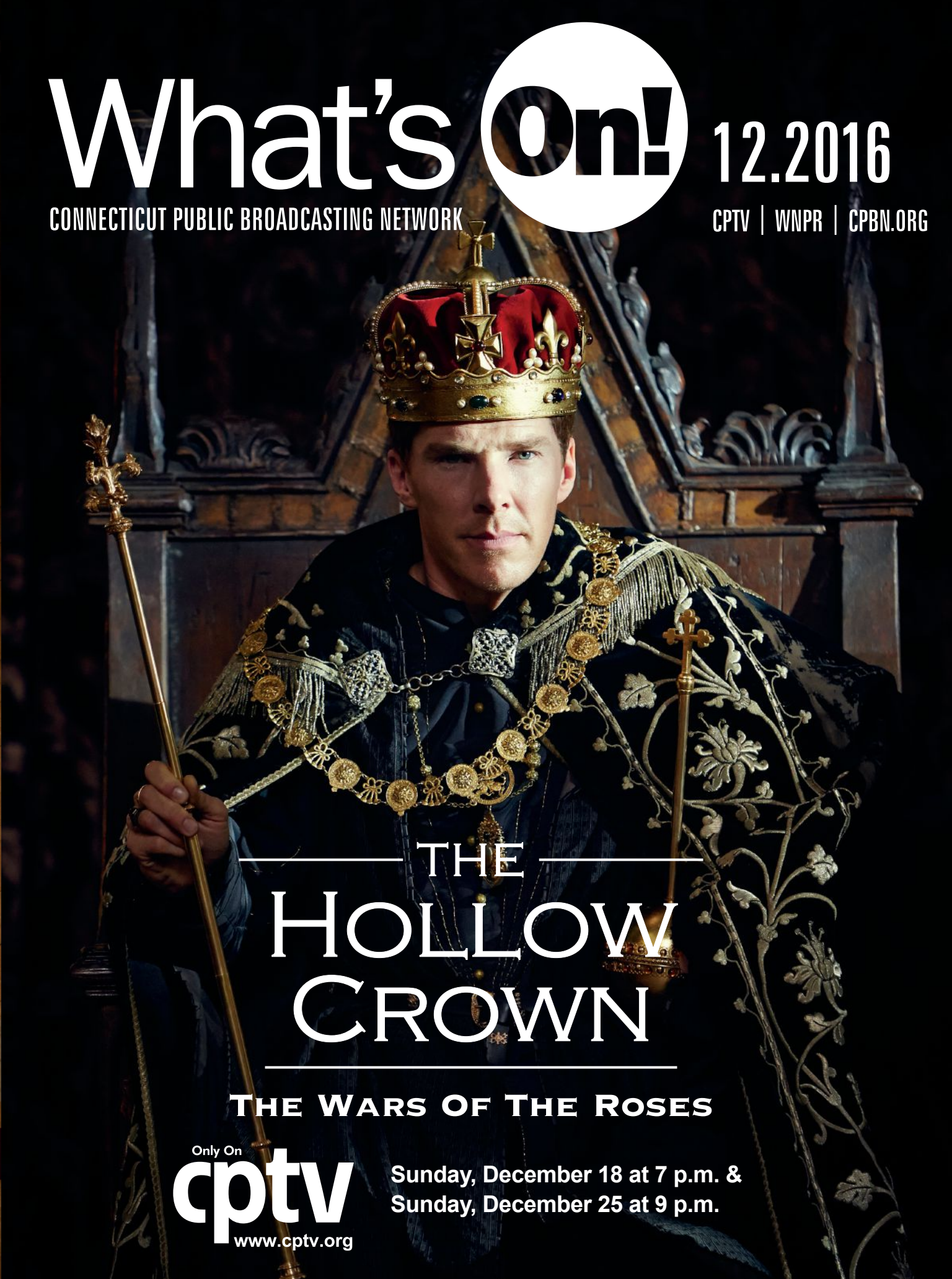
Purchase tickets, view an event program, and catch live coverage at **cptvsports.org/tipoffclassic**

cptv SPORTS

What's On! 12.2016

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC BROADCASTING NETWORK

CPTV | WNPR | CPBN.ORG



THE HOLLOW CROWN

The Wars Of The Roses

Only On cptv

www.cptv.org

Sunday, December 18 at 7 p.m. &
Sunday, December 25 at 9 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For the Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network (CPBN), parent company of Connecticut Public Television (CPTV) and Connecticut Public Radio (WNPR), 2016 has been quite a productive year!

Throughout 2016, CPTV has produced or co-produced a number of original programs, including the new live music series *The Kate*, taped at Old Saybrook's Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center, and the scripted drama *The Cobblestone Corridor*, filmed on location in Connecticut and featuring local talent.

Additionally, CPTV showcased important issues by hosting televised town hall meetings like *Communities in Crisis: Battling Connecticut's Heroin Epidemic*, a timely exploration of Connecticut's heroin and opioid crisis.

CPTV also aired a new season of its national music series *Infinity Hall Live*, and launched the Infinity Hall Live Free & Easy Concert Series. This series of free concerts held at Infinity Hall in Hartford has already resulted in some great evenings of live music!

It's been an exciting year for WNPR as well. The New England News Collaborative (NENC), which includes WNPR and seven other New England public media stations, was formed to explore key issues through a local lens, and the new radio program *NEXT* showcases the NENC's reporting efforts. WNPR's local focus was strengthened even further in 2016 with the premiere of *The Radius Project*, exploring Connecticut's unique capital city.

CPBN is committed to promoting a sense of community here in the Nutmeg State. That's why local programs, projects, and activities like these are so important to us. As the year draws to a close, we offer yet another opportunity: Join CPTV and the Yale Film Study Center on December 11 for a free screening and discussion of the film *Meet the Patels*, part of the *Independent Lens* series. For more information on this event, visit CPTV.org.

None of these community-based efforts would be possible without you, our members. Your continued support allows us to advance our offerings into the new year and beyond. We thank you so much for that support, and wish you a very happy holiday season.

Jerry Franklin
President and CEO, Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network

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THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC MEDIA

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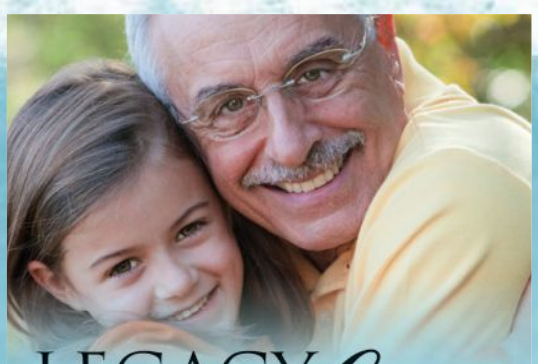


LEGACY Society

All planned gifts are added to CPBN's Endowment Fund unless otherwise specified.

We invite you

to be part of the dynamic future of public media in Connecticut.

Over the past 50 years, CPTV and WNPR programming has evolved, and you've been there with us every step of the way. Whether you're looking to preserve our traditional programming or make a difference in shaping the future of public media, your planned gift of any size will help us meet new challenges and create innovative programming.

For more information, contact Karen Tomasko at 860-275-7280 or ktomasko@cpbn.org or visit cpbn.myplannedgift.org

cptv HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir Featuring Laura Osnes and Martin Jarvis

Monday, December 19 at 9 p.m. on CPTV

Broadway star Laura Osnes and screen and voice actor Martin Jarvis join the world-renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra for their annual Christmas celebration, filmed lived at the Salt Lake Conference Center at Temple Square. The performance includes special arrangements of classic Christmas music sure to put audiences in the holiday spirit.

American Masters: Eero Saarinen: The Architect Who Saw the Future
Tuesday, December 27 at 8 p.m. on CPTV

Explore the life of the modernist architect behind visionary buildings like St. Louis' Gateway Arch. Travel with his son, cinematographer Eric Saarinen, as he visits his father's work on a cathartic journey, shot in 6K with the latest in drone technology.

Ric Edelman's Truth About Retirement
Friday, December 2 at 8 p.m.
Sunday December 4 at 10 a.m.
Tuesday December 6 at 8 p.m.
on CPTV *(live in studio)*

Financial advisor Ric Edelman provides an action plan that viewers can use to ensure a fiscally secure retirement. With a focus on the new Social Security laws that took effect in the beginning of 2016, this program is filled with information individuals can use to make informed decisions about their financial futures.

The Classic Rock Show – Live in Liverpool

Thursday, December 1 at 8 p.m. and
Saturday, December 3 at 8:30 p.m. on CPTV

RED CARPET AND EXCLUSIVE TICKET AND MEET & GREET OPPORTUNITIES

This live concert event stars a virtuoso band of the finest musicians on the planet performing the biggest hits from classic rock's back-catalogue, including The Who, Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton, Fleetwood Mac, and more.

FAMOUS FACES

BRING SHAKESPEARE TO LIFE THIS DECEMBER

ON cptv

"Now is the winter of our discontent. Made glorious summer by this sun of York." So begins *Richard III,* William Shakespeare's play chronicling the life and Machiavellian rise of King Richard III of England.

This December, CPTV presents this classic tragedy, along with Parts I and II of *Henry VI,* as a unique follow-up to the 2013 four-part miniseries *The Hollow Crown.* In *The Hollow Crown: The War of the Roses,* viewers are brought on a menacing journey through rebellion in France, the terror of England's Civil War, and the murders culminating in the infamous reign of King Richard.

With competing characters and extended family trees, however, Shakespeare's "First Tetralogy" can feel as complicated as a soap opera. In case you've forgotten who is who, here are a few key players (and the famous faces you'll see portraying them this December):

Henry VI
The only son of King Henry V, Henry VI succeeds to the English throne at the age of nine months upon his father's death. In the play, Henry is a pious and peaceful man, but ineffective as a ruler. Henry VI is played by Tony-nominee Tom Sturridge (*On the Road, Far From the Madding Crowd*).

Margaret of Anjou
Wife of Henry VI, Queen Margaret is captured by the Earl of Suffolk, whom he intends to marry to Henry in the hopes of using her to influence British policy. Queen Margaret is played by Tony Award-winner and Academy Award-nominee Sophie Okonedo (*Hotel Rwanda, A Raisin in the Sun*).

Edward IV
Edward's father Richard, Duke of York, had been heir to King Henry VI until the birth of Henry's son Edward in 1453. The first Yorkist king of England, Edward serves from 1461-1470 and again from 1471 until his death in 1483. Edward IV is played by film, stage, and radio actor Geoffrey Streatfeild (*Match Point, Kinky Boots*).

Cecily, Duchess of York
Cecily is mother to Richard III and his brother Edward IV. She is played by Tony and Academy Award-winner Dame Judy Dench (*Shakespeare in Love, Philomena*).

Richard III
Arguably the most notorious of kings in the Shakespearean cannon, Richard III is born deformed and serves as the central villain of the play. Consumed by boundless ambition and narcissism, he will stop at nothing to become king. Richard III is played by Emmy Award-winner and Academy Award-nominee Benedict Cumberbatch (*Sherlock, The Imitation Game*).

The Hollow Crown: The War of the Roses
premieres in two parts on CPTV:

***Henry VI, Part 1 & 2*: Sunday, December 18 from 7-11:30 p.m.**
***Richard III*: Sunday, December 25 at 9 p.m.**

Prime Time | December 1-6

- CPTV Original, CPTV National Production or Presentation, or CPTV Co-production indicated in blue font.
- Program or episode premiere indicated by a (P). Live broadcasts indicated by a (L).
- Asterisk indicates that show begins prior to 8 p.m.; two asterisks indicate that show ends after 12 a.m. Visit CPTV.org/schedule for exact start and end times.
- This schedule is accurate as of press time; visit CPTV.org/schedule for the most up-to-date program schedule.

THU|1	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Classic Rock Show - Live in Liverpool** Hear performances from the classic rock back catalogue, with songs made famous by the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, and more.			**Great Moments from Soundbreaking** Paul McCartney, Roger Waters, Beck, Bonnie Raitt, Quincy Jones, Ringo Starr, and others are showcased.			**Inspire Happiness**** Positive psychology authors and researchers reveal how to create happier lives.	
CPTV4U	**The Amish - Shunned: American Experience** Seven former members of the Amish community reflect on what it was like to leave that community.				**The Adventists** Get a look into the realities of Seventh-day Adventism.		**Charlie Rose**	
FRI|2	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Ric Edelman's The Truth About Retirement** Financial advisor Ric Edelman provides an action plan to help ensure a fiscally secure retirement.			**Jacques Pepin's 80th Birthday Celebration** Chefs Lidia Bastianich, Rick Bayless, and Ming Tsai prepare a celebratory feast for Jacques Pepin.			**Il Volo Notte Magica**** Join the superstar trio for a night of music beneath the stars.	
CPTV4U	**NOVA - Alien Planets Revealed** Explore NASA's Kepler telescope.		**Into Deepest Space: The Birth of the Alma Observatory**		**History Detectives - Space Exploration**		**Charlie Rose**	
SAT|3	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Brit Floyd: The World's Greatest Pink Floyd Show - Live!*** (Start: 7:30 p.m.; See CPTV, Dec. 7 at 8 p.m.)		**Classic Rock Show - Live in Liverpool** (See CPTV, Dec. 1 at 8 p.m.)			**Rock, Rhythm & Doo Wop**** Frankie Valli hosts performances by Little Richard, the Five Satins, and more rock 'n' roll legends.		
CPTV4U	**Downton Abbey on Masterpiece - Season 3 Marathon*** (Start: 10 a.m.) Relive *Downton*'s third season with back-to-back episodes starting at 10 a.m.				**Antiques Roadshow - Mansion Masterpieces**		**Antiques Roadshow - Manor House Treasures**	
SUN|4	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Il Volo Notte Magica*** (Start: 7:30 p.m.; See CPTV, Dec. 2 at 11 p.m.)		**Inside Poldark** Go inside the swashbuckling romantic series with cast and creator interviews and behind-the-scenes footage.			**Eat Fat, Get Thin with Dr. Mark Hyman** Dr. Mark Hyman explains how eating fat can help promote weight loss and better health.		
CPTV4U	**Downton Abbey on Masterpiece - Season 4 Marathon*** (Start: 10 a.m.) The fourth season of the beloved series airs in its entirety starting at 10 a.m.					**You Are Cordially Invited**	**Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir feat. Santino...**	
MON|5	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Emin: Live from Russia with David Foster** Recording star Emin and special guests perform at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, Russia.			**Under the Streetlamp: Rockin' Round the Clock** The hits of Frankie Valli, Elvis Presley, Tom Jones, the Beatles, and Roy Orbison are showcased.			**Visions of Italy: Southern Style**** See beautiful Italian scenery shot in high-definition from a helicopter.	
CPTV4U	**NOVA - Wild Ways** Wildlife corridors may help endangered species.		**Nature - Great Zebra Exodus** Zebras make an epic migration.		**My Wild Affair - The Elephant Who Found a Mom**		**Charlie Rose**	
TUE|6	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Ric Edelman's The Truth About Retirement** (See CPTV, Dec. 2 at 8 p.m.)			**Mister Rogers & Me** Meet the television icon's real-life "neighbors" to discover more about the man himself.			**Van Morrison: Live at the Rainbow** Witness the legendary Irish soul singer in a 1973 London concert.	
CPTV4U	**Call the Midwife Holiday Special 2012** The nurses and nuns minister to an abandoned newborn.			**Call the Midwife Holiday Special 2013** The district is evacuated when an unexploded WWII bomb is found.			**Charlie Rose**	

Emin: Live from Russia with David Foster
Saturday, December 3 at 6 p.m. and Monday, December 5 at 8 p.m. on CPTV

Exclusive Ticket and Meet & Greet Opportunities

Catch European musician Emin as he is joined on stage by David Foster and guests for a concert at the famed Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Filmed in front of 50,000 fans, this spectacular performance features new and classic songs like "You Don't Have To Say You Love Me", "You Were Always on My Mind", and "An Unchained Melody".

Prime Time | December 7-12

WED|7	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Brit Floyd: The World's Greatest Pink Floyd Show - Live!** Brit Floyd celebrates the musical legacy of Pink Floyd in spectacular fashion in front of sell-out crowds.			**Rock, Rhythm & Doo Wop** (See CPTV, Dec. 3 at 10:30 p.m.)				**Eat to Live with Joel Fuhrman, M.D.****
CPTV4U	**Rick Steves Special - The Holy Land: Israelis and Palestinians Today*** (Start: 7:30 p.m.)			**Remember Pearl Harbor** (P) Veterans and others who witnessed the Pearl Harbor attack share their stories.			**Charlie Rose**	
THU|8	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Il Volo Notte Magica** (See CPTV, Dec. 2 at 11 p.m.)			**Eat Fat, Get Thin with Dr. Mark Hyman** (See CPTV, Dec. 4 at 10:30 p.m.)			**Under the Streetlamp: Rockin' Round the Clock**** (See CPTV, Dec. 5 at 9:30 p.m.)	
CPTV4U	**Pearl Harbor: Into the Arizona** Go inside the USS Arizona.		**Pearl Harbor - USS Oklahoma: The Final Story**		**The Candy Bomber** A U.S. pilot brought cheer to postwar Germany.		**Charlie Rose**	
FRI|9	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Forever Painless with Miranda Esmonde-White** A groundbreaking and eye-opening education on chronic pain and its causes is presented.			**Viewers' Favorites** CPTV presents a specially selected array of how-to programs, music specials, and more for the whole family.				
CPTV4U	**NOVA - Bombing Hitler's Supergun**		**Nazi Mega Weapons - Super Tanks**		**Nazi Mega Weapons - Hitler's Megaships**		**Charlie Rose**	
SAT|10	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Viewers' Favorites** (See CPTV, Dec. 9 at 9:30 p.m.)							
CPTV4U	**Downton Abbey on Masterpiece - Season 5 Marathon*** (Start: 10 a.m.) Enjoy a full day of *Downton*'s fifth season, with episodes beginning at 10 a.m.						**Secrets of Westminster** Go inside the Houses of Parliament.	
SUN|11	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Viewers' Favorites** (See CPTV, Dec. 9 at 9:30 p.m.)							
CPTV4U	**Downton Abbey on Masterpiece - S'son 6 Marathon*** (Start: 10 a.m.)		**Close to You: Remembering the Carpenters (My Music)** The Carpenters' musical career is explored.			**Great Performances - Bryan Adams in Concert** (P) Adams performs all the hits and audience favorites.		
MON|12	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Antiques Roadshow - Bismarck, Part 2** A Chinese Imperial ceremonial outfit is featured.		**Antiques Roadshow - Bismarck, Part 3** A letter written by George Washington is appraised.		**Antiques Roadshow - Bismarck, Part 1** Two Tlingit shamanic masks from Alaska are featured.		**CPTV Sports' UChoose Thanksgiving Football Game****	
CPTV4U	**Operation Wild Marathon - Parts 1, 2, and 3** Join veterinarian teams around the world as they undertake groundbreaking operations to try to save animals' lives. All three episodes of this miniseries air back-to-back.						**Charlie Rose**	

cptvKids
PBS
Holiday Programming
All Month Long This December
CPTV Kids celebrates the season this December with holiday favorites like Wild Kratts: A Creature Christmas, Curious George: A Very Monkey Christmas, and Peg + Cat + Holidays.
Visit cptv.org/schedule for complete listings.

Prime Time | December 13-18

TUE | 13	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Ancient Roads from Christ to Constantine - Parts 1, 2, and 3** See the first three episodes of this series tracking Christianity's evolution from a small movement to the largest religion in the world. Host Jonathan Phillips, an author and history professor, journeys into the fascinating world of the early Christians.						**Sacred Journeys with Bruce Feiler - Lourdes** U.S. military members visit the shrine of Lourdes.	
CPTV4U	**Call the Midwife Holiday Special 2014** Rehearsals for the Sunday school Christmas concert create problems.			**Masterpiece Mystery! - The Lady Vanishes** A socialite suspects foul play when a young woman disappears.			**Charlie Rose**	

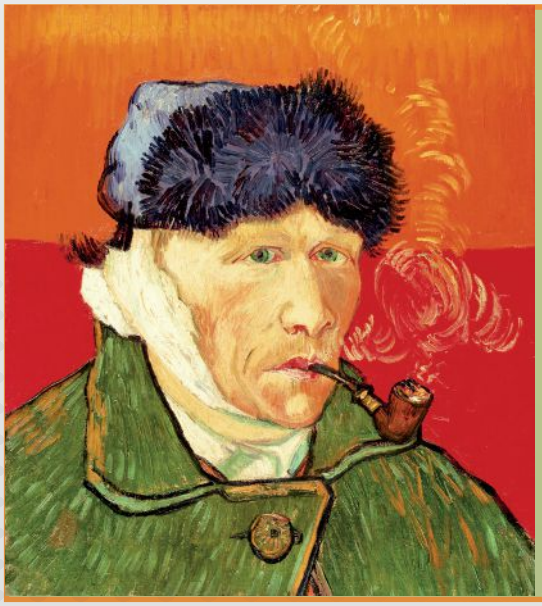
WED | 14	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Da Vinci: The Lost Treasure** Fiona Bruce attempts to uncover the story of the enigmatic genius.		**NOVA - Mystery of a Masterpiece** Cutting-edge imaging analysis helps tie a portrait to Leonardo da Vinci.		**Secrets of the Dead - Van Gogh's Ear** (P) The night when the artist cut his ear is explored.		**Sister Wendy at the Norton Simon Museum** Visit a collection of art with Sister Wendy Beckett.	
CPTV4U	**Antiques Roadshow - Austin, Part 2**		**Antiques Roadshow - Austin, Part 3**		**Antiques Roadshow - Junk in the Trunk 6**		**Charlie Rose**	

THU | 15	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**The Widower - Part 1** After silencing his wife forever, Malcolm Webster has a new bride.		**The Inspector Lynley Mysteries - A Suitable Vengeance** Tommy and Helen visit his family's estate, where family secrets and a murder come to light.			**Masterpiece Mystery! - Sherlock, Series 2: A Scandal in Belgravia** Sherlock begins a duel of wits with an antagonist as brilliant as himself: Irene Adler.		
CPTV4U	**The Great British Baking Show - Christmas Master Class** (P)		**Walt Disney: American Experience - Part 1** The life and legacy of the iconic filmmaker are explored from his early days creating Mickey Mouse.				**Charlie Rose**	

FRI | 16	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Midsomer Murders - Blood Wedding, Part 1** The maid of honor at a wedding is killed.		**Shetland - Dead Water, Part 1** A journalist acquaintance of Perez dies in an apparent accident.		**Infinity Hall Live - Joss Stone** The singer-songwriter showcases her lustrous vocal prowess.		**Bluegrass Underground**	**In Focus**
CPTV4U	**NOVA - Mystery of a Masterpiece** (See CPTV, Dec. 14 at 9 p.m.)		**Secrets of the Dead - The Mona Lisa Mystery**		**Da Vinci: The Lost Treasure** (See CPTV, Dec. 14 at 8 p.m.)		**Charlie Rose**	

SAT | 17	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Movie Classics Collection - The Awful Truth*** (P) (Start: 7:30 p.m.) Irene Dunne and Cary Grant star.		**Bing Crosby Rediscovered: American Masters** Unprecedented access to Bing Crosby's archives highlight this look at the popular actor and singer.			**Mary Tyler Moore: A Celebration** This look at Moore's career features great clips and interviews.		**Erma Bombeck: Legacy of...**
CPTV4U	**A Place to Call Home Marathon** Episodes 1-4 of the first season of *A Place to Call Home* air back-to-back starting at 8 p.m. The sweeping romantic drama centers on enigmatic nurse Sarah Adams as she returns to her native Australia after two decades in Europe.							

SUN | 18	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Great Performances - The Hollow Crown: Henry VI, Parts 1 and 2*** (P) (Start: 7 p.m.) War rages in England in Part 1, airing 7-9 p.m. Tom Sturridge and Hugh Bonneville star. Benedict Cumberbatch joins the cast for Part 2, airing 9-11:30 p.m., as bitter rivalries erupt and the king is overshadowed by Queen Margaret.							**Shakespeare's Tomb**
CPTV4U	**Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir feat. Alfie Boe...**		**Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir feat. Deborah...**		**Joshua Bell's Seasons of Cuba** (P) Bell leads an evening of music.		**Cuba Mia: Portrait of an All Woman Orchestra**	



Secrets of the Dead: Van Gogh's Ear

Wednesday, December 14 at 10 p.m. on CPTV

The moment when Vincent van Gogh looked into a mirror, held up a blade, and cut into his own ear defines his turbulent life and art. But what really caused his actions that evening? Bernadette Murphy, a researcher living in Provence, has worked for five years to piece together a detailed timeline of the events leading up to one of the most infamous moments in art history.

Prime Time | December 19-24

MON|19	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Antiques Roadshow - Best of 20** (P) Favorite appraisals include a Tang Dynasty marble lion.		**NOVA - Mystery of a Masterpiece** (See CPTV, Dec. 14 at 9 p.m.)		**Secrets of the Dead - The Mona Lisa Mystery** Is the famed Mona Lisa painting the original version?		**Da Vinci: The Lost Treasure** (See CPTV, Dec. 14 at 8 p.m.)	
CPTV4U	**NOVA - Treasures of the Earth: Gems**		**NOVA - Treasures of the Earth: Metals**		**NOVA - Treasures of the Earth: Power**		**Charlie Rose**	
TUE|20	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Ancient Roads from Christ to Constantine - Parts 4, 5, and 6** Jonathan Phillips continues to track Christianity's evolution from a small movement to the largest religion in the world as the final three episodes of this miniseries air back-to-back.						**Sacred Journeys with Bruce Feiler - Jerusalem** Jewish and Christian pilgrims visit Israel.	
CPTV4U	**Call the Midwife Holiday Special 2015** A grieving mother receives an unexpected surprise.			**The Inspector Lynley Mysteries - A Suitable Vengeance** (See CPTV, Dec. 15 at 9 p.m.)			**Charlie Rose**	
WED|21	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Nature - Snow Chick** The incredible journey of a vulnerable Emperor penguin chick is showcased.		**NOVA - Secrets of Noah's Ark** A clay tablet reveals a surprising new version of the flood story.		**Time Scanners - Colosseum** Engineering secrets of ancient Rome's Colosseum are uncovered.		**Antiques Roadshow - Best of 20** (See CPTV, Dec. 19 at 8 p.m.)	
CPTV4U	**Antiques Roadshow - Bismarck, Part 1**		**Antiques Roadshow - Bismarck, Part 2**		**Antiques Roadshow - Bismarck, Part 3**		**Charlie Rose**	
THU|22	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**The Widower - Part 2** After two failed attempts on Felicity's life, Malcolm reinvents himself.		**The Inspector Lynley Mysteries - Deception on His Mind** Sahlah is engaged to a young Pakistani man in an arranged marriage, but he ends up murdered.			**Masterpiece Mystery! - Sherlock, Series 2: The Hounds of Baskerville** Sherlock seeks the truth about a monstrous creature.		
CPTV4U	**A Chef's Life Holiday Special** Follow Vivian's holiday celebrations.		**Walt Disney: American Experience - Part 2** (See CPTV4U, Dec. 15 at 9 p.m.)				**Charlie Rose**	
FRI|23	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Midsomer Murders - Blood Wedding, Part 2** (See CPTV, Dec. 16 at 8 p.m.)		**Shetland - Dead Water, Part 2** (See CPTV, Dec. 16 at 9 p.m.)		**Infinity Hall Live - Sister Sparrow & the Dirty Birds** Groove along to horn-fueled infectious grooves.		**Bluegrass Underground**	**Sun Studio Sessions**
CPTV4U	**NOVA - Secrets of Noah's Ark** (See CPTV, Dec. 21 at 9 p.m.)		**Nature - Animal Reunions** People and animals reunite.		**Nature - Love in the Animal Kingdom**		**Charlie Rose**	
SAT|24	**8:00**	**8:30**	**9:00**	**9:30**	**10:00**	**10:30**	**11:00**	**11:30**
CPTV	**Jordan Smith: 'Tis the Season** (P) The Season 9 winner of NBC's *The Voice* performs holiday songs.		**Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir feat. Alfie Boe and Tom Brokaw**		**Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir feat. Laura Osnes and Martin Jarvis** (P)		**Jordan Smith: 'Tis the Season** (See CPTV, Dec. 24 at 8 p.m.)	
CPTV4U	**A Place to Call Home Marathon** Episodes 5-8 of the first season of *A Place to Call Home* air back-to-back starting at 8 p.m.							

Ancient Roads: From Christ to Constantine

Tuesday, December 13 & 20 from 8-11 p.m. on CPTV

Join author and distinguished history professor Jonathan Phillips of Royal Holloway, University of London as he takes viewers on a spectacular and dramatic 12,000 mile journey of a lifetime, traveling ancient roads to the very places where Christianity began. Explore the triumphs and tribulations of the faith's history, reliving its pivotal moments at the actual locations where they unfolded.

Prime Time | December 25-31

SUN|25	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Call the Midwife Holiday Special 2016*** (P) (Start: 7:30 p.m.) The midwives travel to South Africa.		**Great Performances - The Hollow Crown: Richard III** (P) In his quest for the crown, Richard plans the murder of his brother. After Edward IV dies, Richard's path to the throne is clear, except for the princes in the tower. Benedict Cumberbatch and Judi Dench star.					**Secrets of the Dead****
CPTV4U	**First You Dream: The Music of Kander & Ebb**		**Great Performances - Billy Elliot the Musical Live** A young boy in a mining community in England journeys from the boxing ring to the ballet barre.					

MON|26	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Antiques Roadshow - Birmingham, Part 1** Highlights include Andy Warhol lithographs.		**Antiques Roadshow - Austin, Part 3** Fantastic finds include a scrapbook of WWII photos.		**Time Scanners - Colosseum** (See CPTV, Dec. 21 at 10 p.m.)		**CPTV Sports' 2016 Boys Basketball Tip-Off Classic: Newington vs. Notre Dame-W. Haven****	
CPTV4U	**Nature - Penguin Post Office** Visit an unusual post office in Antarctica.		**Nature - Snow Chick** (See CPTV, Dec. 21 at 8 p.m.)		**Globe Trekker - Antarctica** Go sea kayaking and penguin watching.		**Charlie Rose**	

TUE|27	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Eero Saarinen: American Masters** (P) The Finnish-American modernist architect is profiled.		**Frontline - Exodus** (P) First-person stories of refugees and migrants fleeing war and persecution for Europe are shared.				**CPTV Sports' 2016 Girls Basketball Tip-Off Classic: Mercy-M'town vs. Holy Cross-W'bury****	
CPTV4U	**Shakespeare Live! From the RSC** (P) Benedict Cumberbatch, Judi Dench, and Ian McKellen mark the life and work of William Shakespeare.				**The Inspector Lynley Mysteries - Deception on His Mind** (See CPTV, Dec. 22 at 9 p.m.)			**Charlie Rose: The Week**

WED|28	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Nature - Cold Warriors: Wolves and Buffalo** Buffalo and wolves engage in life-and-death dramas.		**NOVA - Building Pharaoh's Chariot** Highly accurate replicas of Egyptian royal chariots are tested.		**Egypt's Treasure Guardians** (P) People determined to keep Egypt's heritage safe are showcased.		**CPTV Sports' 2016 Boys Basketball Tip-Off Classic: Greenwich vs. E. Hartford****	
CPTV4U	**Antiques Roadshow - Best of 20** (See CPTV, Dec. 19 at 8 p.m.)		**Antiques Roadshow - New York City, Part 2**		**Antiques Roadshow - New York City, Part 3**		**Charlie Rose**	

THU|29	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**The Widower - Part 3** As Malcolm continues to evade capture, DS Henry is thwarted at every step.		**The Inspector Lynley Mysteries - In Pursuit of the Proper Sinner** Lynley's assigned to a double murder and persuades Webberley to allow Havers on the case.			**Masterpiece Mystery! - Sherlock, Series 2: The Reichenbach Fall** Sherlock fights for his reputation, sanity, and life when he locks horns with Moriarty.		
CPTV4U	**Independent Lens - Meet the Patels** (P) A man from a Hindu family enters the semi-arranged marriage system.			**Independent Lens - Autism in Love** Follow adults on the autism spectrum as they navigate romance.			**Charlie Rose**	

FRI|30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Midsomer Murders - Shot at Dawn, Part 1** A rivalry between two families turns violent.		**Shetland - Blue Lightning, Part 1** A scientist is found murdered in her lab.		**Infinity Hall Live - Great Performances, Vol. 1** Top performances by past guests are revisited.		**Bluegrass Underground**	**Sun Studio Sessions**
CPTV4U	**NOVA - Building Pharaoh's...** (See CPTV, Dec. 28 at 9 p.m.)		**Egypt's Treasure Guardians** (See CPTV, Dec. 28 at 10 p.m.)		**In Search of Myths and Heroes - Queen of Sheba**		**Charlie Rose**	

SAT|31	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
CPTV	**Movie Classics Collection - That's Entertainment III** (P) June Allyson, Cyd Charisse, Lena Horne, Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, and others introduce clips from more than 100 MGM musicals.				**Pioneers of Television - Variety** Get a look at the stars and shows that established the variety format.		**Pioneers of Television - Late Night** The formative years of late-night television are explored.	
CPTV4U	**A Place to Call Home Marathon*** (Start: 7 p.m.) Episodes 9-13 of the first season of *A Place to Call Home* air back-to-back starting at 7 p.m.							

Call the Midwife Holiday Special

Sunday, December 25 at 7:30 p.m. on CPTV

This holiday season, the beloved series is transported to the Eastern Cape of South Africa when Nonnatus House receives an SOS from an understaffed and underfunded mission hospital. Can the medics and midwives make a difference in the lives of people who depend upon their work?

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Earl Gray Ginger Hot Toddy

From Faith:

Whether you're sampling homemade holiday cookies or looking for a winter cocktail to have on a cold, snowy night, Food Schmooze® Senior Contributor Anthony DeSerio's Earl Grey Ginger Hot Toddy is both warming and soul-satisfying. This isn't your grandmother's classic hot toddy, that's for sure… Anthony's combines several liquors you'll love having around long after trying his mug of comfort.

Faith

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Steep a pot of Earl Grey tea with the ginger slices.

2. In a mug, combine all the ingredients and top it with the hot tea. Garnish with a cinnamon stick.

INGREDIENTS:

1 pot steeping Earl Grey tea

2 ¼ slices fresh ginger, peeled

1 ¼ ounces blended scotch
(A.D. likes Money Shoulder)

1/2 ounce Amaro Montenegro

1/2 ounce Lillet blanc

BY ERIK OFGANG

The Hidden Nazi Past of a Famed Architect

HOW PHILIP JOHNSON, DESIGNER OF NEW CANAAN'S ICONIC GLASS HOUSE, FELL IN LOVE WITH FASCISM

Sometimes people who live in glass houses do throw stones.

That's the case with Philip Johnson, the celebrated architect who designed and lived in the Glass House retreat in New Canaan, an important building in modern architecture that is now a museum.

Prior to the United States' entrance into World War II, Johnson expressed passionate admiration for Nazism, traveled to Germany on several occasions and made vehemently anti-Semitic statements, before an apparent change of heart in 1940.

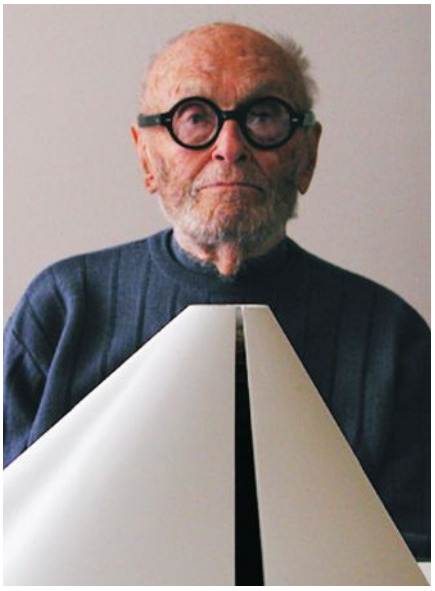
"He was a fervent and committed Nazi and very possibly a German agent working in the United States on behalf of the fascist government of Germany," says Marc Wortman, the New Haven-based author of *1941: Fighting the Shadow War — A Divided America in a World at War.* The book was released earlier this year and has put a spotlight on Johnson's Nazi leanings and the activities of others who lobbied to keep the U.S. out of World War II prior to the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor 75 years ago this month.

Johnson was born in 1906 to a wealthy family in Cleveland. By 1932, the 26-year-old was a Manhattan socialite and rising architectural star. Earlier that year he co-curated the Museum of Modern Art's groundbreaking exhibition on contemporary architecture and design, widely credited with introducing Americans to modern European architectural style.

It was also in 1932 that Johnson first heard Hitler speak at a rally in Germany. Johnson recalled of the moment, "You simply could not fail to be caught up in the excitement of it, by the marching songs, by the crescendo and climax of the whole thing, as Hitler came on at last to harangue the crowd."

Johnson found Hitler's attitude toward Jews to be in keeping with his own. Wortman writes that after one visit to Paris he wrote to a friend, saying, "Lack of leadership and direction in the [French] state has let the one group get control who always gain power in a nation's time of weakness — the Jews."

But, Johnson, who was gay, overlooked the blatant, state-sanctioned and often violent homophobia in Nazi-controlled Germany. Perhaps even more surprising, Wortman says, is that Johnson was also able to overlook the Nazi attack on modern architecture. "This was the architecture and design style that Philip Johnson had made his name advocating and it was classified as degenerate art by the Nazis," Wortman says.



Philip Johnson WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Over the course of the 1930s, Johnson's enchantment with the Nazi Party continued, and he made regular trips to Germany. He also joined with other Nazi cheerleaders in the U.S. to support politicians he felt were fascist-leaning, including Louisiana's Huey Long.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Johnson visited the Polish Corridor, the Baltic seacoast and Danzig (a semi-autonomous city-state now part of Poland), and in an article cited in Wortman's book, described the area as a wasteland waiting for Germany. "In the towns there were no shops, no automobiles, no pavements and again no trees. There were not even any Poles to be seen in the streets, only Jews!" Johnson added, "The longer I am here, the more I have to struggle to grasp once more what could possibly be the reason for Danzig's not being part of Germany."

Johnson got his wish on Sept. 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. Embedded with the press contingent that traveled with Hitler's army during the invasion, he drew the ire of many of the international journalists he traveled with, who, unlike him, were horrified by the war the Nazis were perpetrating.

By that time, the FBI had began keeping a dossier on Johnson. He was never charged, but later in the war, when questions arose about a possible position for Johnson in government intelligence (because he was fluent in German), an FBI agent warned in a memo to J. Edgar Hoover, "I can think of no more dangerous man to have working in an agency which possesses so many military secrets."

In 1940, with American fascist sympathizers facing increasing scrutiny, Johnson stopped publically supporting Nazism. "I think he understood that the U.S. government was doing all it could to support the British in their fight with Germany and that he was going to be on the losing side of history," Wortman says.

Johnson was able to sweep his fascist leanings under the rug and it never adversely impacted his career.

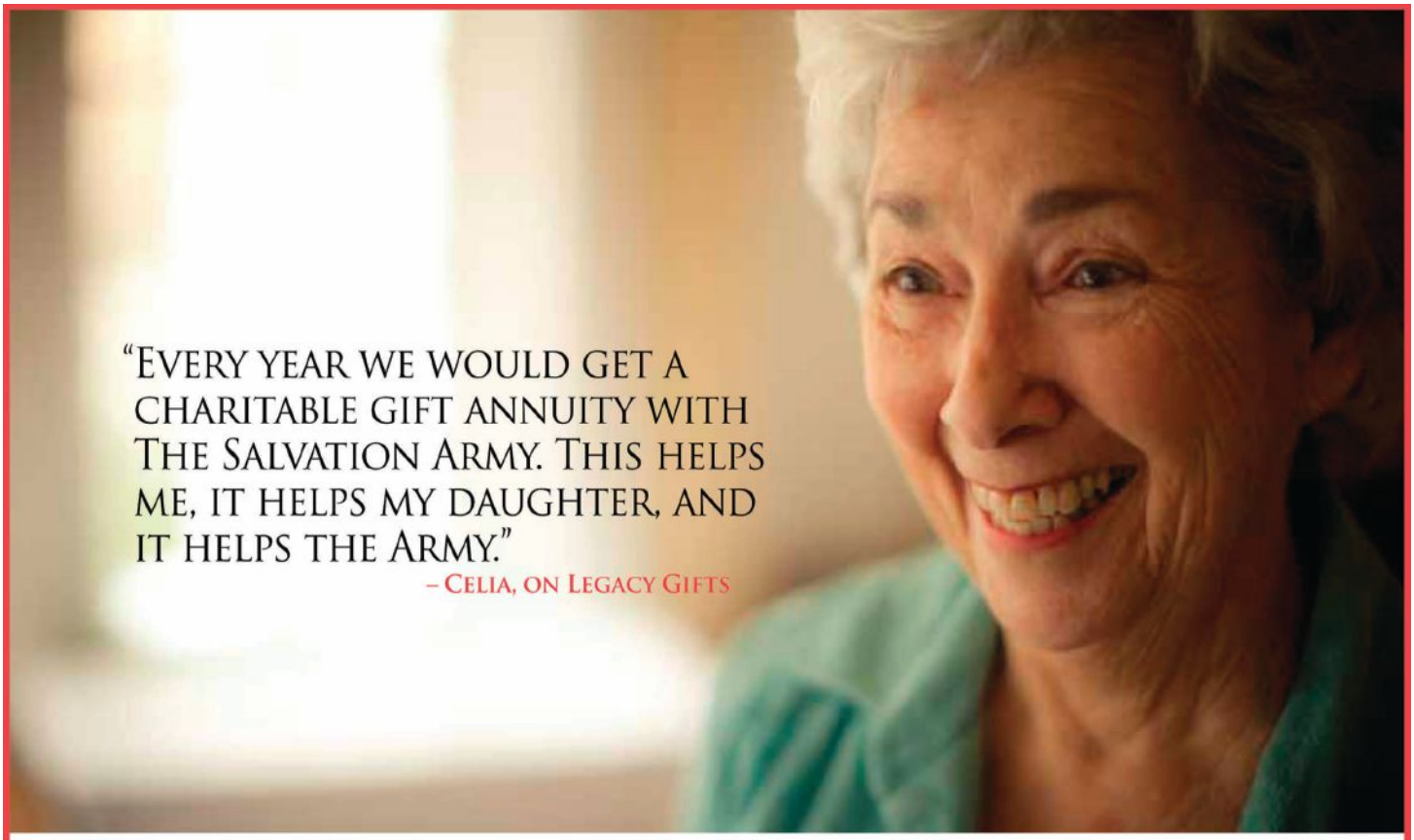
Wortman says, "After the war, he never formally apologized" and tried to explain it away as "a young man's fantasies." However, Johnson did make overtures to Jewish communities. "He gave his services to design a synagogue in Port Chester, New York, and he did some design work for the state of Israel," Wortman says. "He was considered to be a mentor by many architects and did not discriminate as far as I'm aware among any of the young architects [some of whom were Jewish] who followed him."

In 2005, Johnson died in his sleep at the age of 98 at his Glass House in New Canaan.

In a 1993 *Vanity Fair* article, Johnson expressed regret for his actions. "I have no excuse [for] such utter, unbelievable stupidity. … I don't know how you expiate guilt." But when asked if he would have built for Hitler in 1936, he replied, "Who's to say? That would have tempted anyone."

Even still, Wortman believes Johnson's early support of Nazism should be as transparent as the centerpiece of the retreat he designed, built, lived and died in.

"This was not the sort of passing obsession of a very young man. This was a mature adult who remained a committed Nazi for eight full years. Eight full years during which Hitler was extending his reach in Europe, creating war tensions and finally invading Poland and starting World War II."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58	4.2%	67	4.8%	76	6.0%	85	7.8%
59	4.3%	68	4.9%	77	6.2%	86	8.0%
60	4.4%	69	5.0%	78	6.4%	87	8.2%
61	4.4%	70	5.1%	79	6.6%	88	8.4%
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